

The Christian Scholar

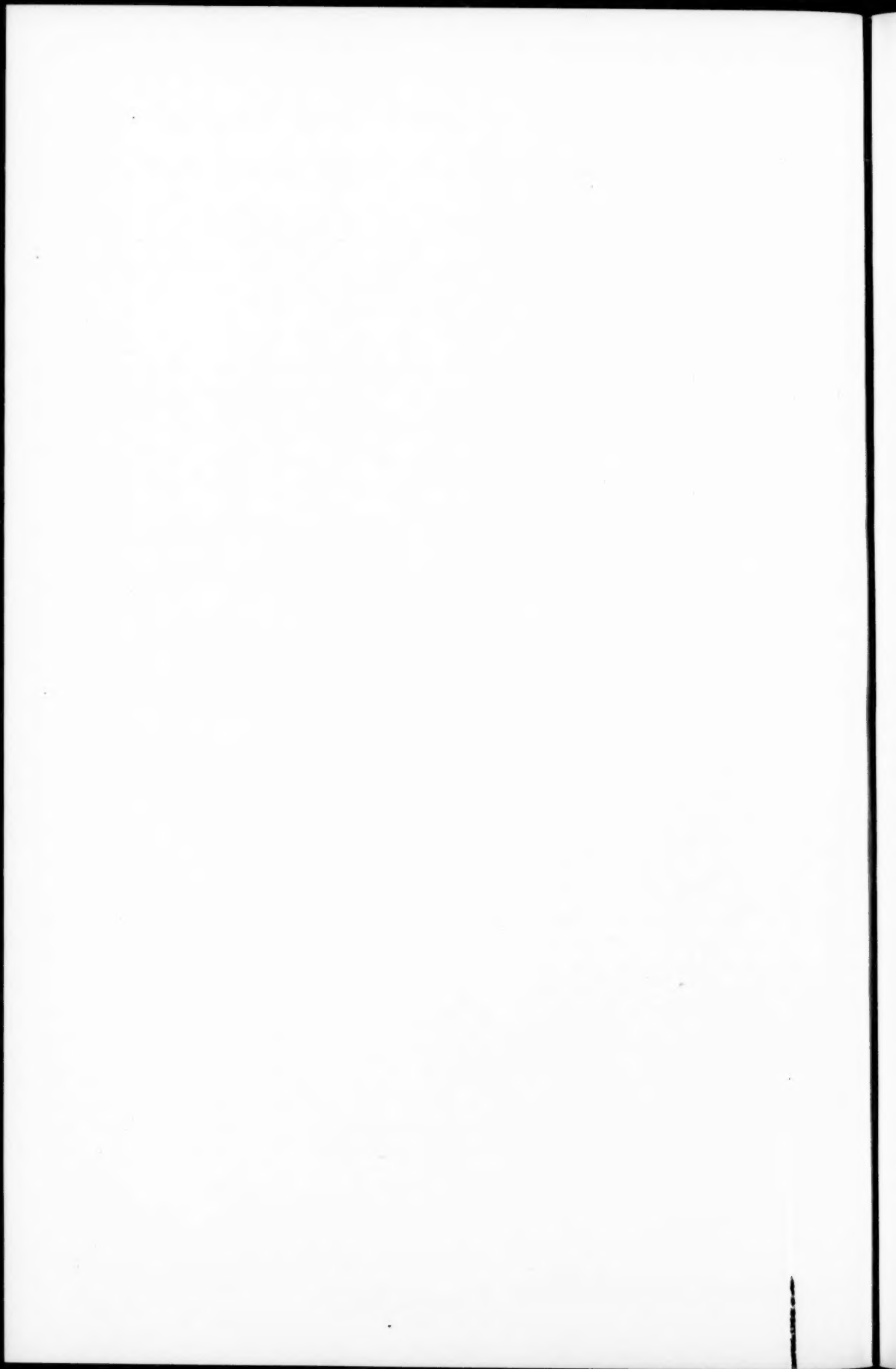
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The Editor's Preface

This issue is devoted largely to papers presented at the Faculty Conference concerned with religion and education at Montreat, North Carolina, June 8-13, 1954. A general paper introduces a series of essays dealing with the intellectual disciplines and Christian faith. Two series of lectures which were given at the Conference are not presented here. One was a series of evening addresses on "The Church and the World" by Dr. John A. Mackay, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey. The other was a sequence of theological lectures by Dr. Kenneth J. Foreman of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Kentucky and Dr. James I. McCord of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas. The Conference was held under the cooperative sponsorship of the Professors' Section of the Presbyterian Educational Association of the South, the Methodist Professors of the Methodist Church, the Boards of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. and the Methodist Church and the Faculty Christian Fellowship, a "related movement" of the Department of Campus Christian Life of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. The secretaries of the Boards most closely associated with the Conference were, respectively, Dr. Hunter B. Blakely and Dr. Richard N. Bender. Co-chairmen for the Conference were Professor Rene de Visme Williamson, formerly of the University of Tennessee and who served for three months last spring as a faculty consultant for the Presbyterian Church in the

U. S., and now teaching in the Department of Government in Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge; and, Professor John W. Dixon of the Department of the Humanities at Emory-at-Oxford in Oxford, Georgia. Their interpretation of the Conference, which serves as the introduction to this issue, follows this preface.

Before turning to it, the readers' attention is called to a new approach in the reviews and publications' section of *The Christian Scholar*. The last issue (September, 1954) actually launched this new approach. Once again here reviews and essays are presented which are centered upon books not specifically written for the "religious audience" nor with a theological subject-matter as primary; but these reviews and essays are written by persons who view such books from the standpoint of biblical faith. What is being attempted in this section of this quarterly is the relating of basic affirmations of Hebraic-Christian faith to the literary products of our time and culture, and the locating of such products not only on the map of knowledge but also within the Christian interpretation of culture itself. As soon as possible, this journal will also present bibliographical surveys by disciplines, in which scholars will indicate the books which are important to their own fields and have a more general significance as well. Here an historian, for example, will report to his philosopher-colleague or someone in another discipline what of importance has appeared recently in the study of history, why it is important in relation to other fields

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of knowledge, and what peculiar interest, if any, it may have to Christian scholars.

This preface continues now with an interpretative "foreword" to this issue by Professors Williamson and Dixon.

There is developing in the faculties of our American institutions of higher learning something which is coming to be known as the faculty Christian movement. This movement represents a re-awakening of Christian consciousness among professors, a desire to know more about their Christian faith in order that their religious knowledge might grow apace with their professional knowledge, and a recognition of the obligation to relate their Christian faith to their profession in all its aspects—instruction, administration, research, and public relations. It is a response to the crisis in present day education which, in turn, is but a phase of the world situation in which we find ourselves engulfed. This response is taking many forms which are denominational, inter-denominational, and non-denominational, and it is receiving increasing support from foundations, denominational boards, and the National Council of Churches.

One of the most frequently encountered expressions of this new faculty Christian consciousness is the faculty Christian conference. For many years the Faculty Section of the Presbyterian Educational Association of the South has met annually in Montreat, North

Carolina, to discuss matters of common concern. This year the conference was held jointly with the Professors of the Methodist Church with the co-sponsorship of the Faculty Christian Fellowship of the National Council of Churches. Covering a period of five days from June 8 to June 13, Methodist and Presbyterian professors met together and sought to discuss and, as far as possible, to exemplify the aims of the faculty Christian movement. The overall program of the conference was divided into three parts with mornings devoted to theology, afternoons to the relations between theology and the major academic disciplines, and evenings to the position of the church in the world of today.

Most of the papers and addresses which were read and discussed at Montreat are published in this issue of *The Christian Scholar* not only because of their intrinsic merit but also because they indicate the calibre and kind of thinking which is going on among the Christian professors in our American colleges and universities. We trust that the readers of *The Christian Scholar* will find these papers and addresses instructive and stimulating, and that they will give us the benefit of their comments, criticisms, and suggestions.

Christian Education in Today's World

ERNEST CADMAN COLWELL



his was not a subject of my own forming and accustomed as I am, as an administrative officer of a university, to make speeches on all kinds of subjects including those about which I know practically nothing I find that this particular subject strains my conscience somewhat beyond my ability to tolerate. I have decided, therefore, that "Today's World" is a theme that belongs to someone else. I am not sure I know very much about Christian Education, but at any rate, what I know I know about Christian Education for I have been in college and university work since 1919. This work is my life; it is my dynamic interest and I am interested in it basically because I am a Christian.

Because this is true, I feel considerable freedom in trying to discuss Christian Education today, and if I repudiate today's world it is not only because of my lack of knowledge about it but it is also, I assume, because I am bored to tears by the prophets of its doom. The apocalyptic pictures of the last days no longer move me. The implication in my subject, that today is in some sense an awful time, is not one that fits my knowledge of the few bits of human history which I have studied. In my room, I picked up a copy of the Scriptures and opened it to the ninety-first psalm. It tries, in that long long ago, to meet apprehensions similar to those which face many people today: "Thou shalt not fear for the terror by night, nor for the arrows that fly by day, nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand." What kind of a world would that be? Certainly, that "today" would offer no comfortable security.

I have heard the Victorian Age recently referred to as a period of great peace, stability and security, but was the total amount of human tragedy any less in a period when parents could expect more than half of their children to die before they matured? Would this bereavement be any easier to bear than the ills which we now imagine are about to descend upon us? I am convinced that the age of security for the ordinary human being is a myth. The middle ages may have been ordered theologically but the life of the serf in the feudal village was subject to immediate and complete disorder. And if the masses of the people in the cities did not have to fear the prospects of the H-bombs, they did not know whether it would be today that the plague would strike again. They had no security in regard to the conditions of their lives; they had no adequate protection from barbarous physical violence. They lived in a world of pain and trouble, and so has every generation. The pattern of our troubles vary, but the apocalyptic hope is a vain delusion.

It is because I am anti-apocalyptic, I suppose, that subjects like "Christian Education in Today's World" fail to move me very much. This is not because I

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want to retreat from the problems of the world, but I have a job and it is education. I do not believe that working hard at this job is a retreat. My personal conviction is that the work of education in college and university to the extent that it is done in terms that conform to the Christian faith, is pregnant with promise for our day and for the days to come. So I restrict my world to the world of the campus. This is the world I know.

II

I would like to ask two questions about Christian education in terms of the world of the college and university. The first one is: Does it today exist? If this question has to be answered briefly, the answer has to be "No, it doesn't"—not in any adequate sense. This is not to imply that there are no Christian elements in particular institutions, but it must be said that the fabric of Higher Education in America today cannot, in honesty, be called Christian. The common attitudes of the professors, through the length and breadth of the land, are not attitudes when applied to their work as professors which produce an education that can be clearly called "a Christian education". We delude ourselves, I believe, if we identify what exists today as Christian Higher Education.

I would like to ask a second question: Can Christian education be instituted tomorrow in the college and university? I think the answer to this is "No, it cannot be"—not in any extensive way.

These negatives of mine are not intended to discourage or intimidate the faculty members who are here, but they are, I believe, realistic answers. On college campus after college campus, in university after university, even in church-related schools, there are teachers who are professionally competent but who are convinced that their vocation as college professors does not involve them in an interest in religion. They see the possibility of, carefully distinguishing between their work in the classroom and their personal religious faith. I believe that it is not possible today to overstate the extent of indifference in regard to religion in the professional work of the faculty in colleges and universities. Now I do not mean to say that most of these people are irreligious people; I do suggest that many of them have succeeded completely in separating their religious faith from their work as professors. You cannot have Christian education until this gulf is bridged, until there is some effective relationship between the ultimate devotion in the life of the individual and his professional behavior. If our Christian faith doesn't mean something in relationship to the most important occupation of our lives year after year; if it is only something that may be good for the meeting of church groups or to handle delicately between thumb and forefinger at a minister's tea, then it is an impotent faith and the significance of our religion is reduced to an absolute zero. I am baffled by the effort to build the bridge across the gulf but I am convinced that better and wiser people than I am will succeed in building it in the years that are ahead of us.

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This attitude of "don't care-ism" which asserts that it isn't my business as a professor to do anything about the Christian religion is still, as I have tried to emphasize, a very strong attitude in the universities. College teachers in some departments talk about a "cultural lag" in our society. It is very hard to recognize the cultural lag in your own business, but I would say that if we had some sociometric device that could measure the social group we call the college faculty, we would find the average index of the lag pointing to twenty-five, or possibly even forty years. While this state of "indifferentism", I am happy to say, reached its peak in years that now lie in the past, the hangover is still with us. It is in the habits of those who have not studied or learned or thought constructively since they received their union card in the form of a Ph. D. degree. They are still talking about complete objectivity. This may be out of date, but how many of us know it is out of date? How many college faculties can be swept into action by the challenge that affirms it is out of date? Their position is wobbling a little; it is a bit unsteady on its base today on many a campus, but it is still pretty well entrenched and academic soldiers are not easily routed from the trenches. The tide may have turned, but it is no Bay of Fundy tide; the water doesn't rise and fall fifty feet every few hours in the university environment. Rather it moves with the ponderous deliberation of the tides on Florida's west coast which may rise a foot in six hours and where the only way you can tell it is moving is by finding a water line on the shore that is a little higher than the current level of the water. We ought to be encouraged by the change that is taking place but we ought not to hail it as the victory we are seeking. It is just a beginning of a movement that is far from its fruition and has a long journey to travel.

III

I would like to quote you a paragraph or two from a paper read by Peter Viereck at the Chicago meeting of the N. E. A. this past winter. He points out a risk we run because we recognize that the tide has turned. He says there used to be just two alternatives confronting us: "Alternative One for American education is the Unadjusted Man, cultivating his inner riches of liberty and reverie. Alternative Two is the wholesome adjusted Rotarian, with his robot values in a world of cellophane, plastics, and hygiene-worship". We now have, he says, a Third Alternative which "seems to affirm the humanities and spiritual values but in an entirely mechanical uninspired way". Alternative Three, he goes on to say, "is parloring God just as snobbishly today as the professional or conformist 'non-conformist' of the 1930's was parloring socialism. Fully weighing my words, I assert that this manicuring of our sacred humanistic and spiritual values into mere fashionable fads may kill these values more surely, even though more subtly, than if open barbarians, torch in hand, were burning down our churches, our libraries, our universities". He says what I think we have all recognized, that "American youth is indeed turning back to religion and to more creative interests than in the

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shallow, Marxist 1930's. Yet before we herald this salutary development with premature trumpets, remember this caution: when religion is handled by the yard and wrapped in cellophane, when artistic creativity is sold like dry goods, with spontaneous inspiration left out, then all we have is commercialism triumphing all over again, this time in the name of anti-commercialism. "Our great universities" he continues his indictment, "steeped in the sin of intellectual pride, are killing intellectuality and killing the humanities not by the now old fashioned vulgarity of the nineteenth century Gilded Age but by turning an entire generation of graduate students into trained seals. For such docile circus animals, literature no longer means the shudder of awe before the beautiful; nor does it mean the mass-man's, at least honest and open, shudder of contempt. The trained seal's love of literature means leaping sleekly through the endlessly receding hoops of the criticism of the criticism of criticism—and after each successive hoop of the newest New Criticism, gracefully swallowing some fishy 'explication' in mid-air. The most corrupting, most insidious development is the substitution of technique for art; the mass-produced 'just as good' for the real thing. What once resulted from the inspired and audacious craftsmanship of a heartbreakingly lonely individual is now mass-produced in painless, safe, and uninspired capsules."

I have quoted this paper at some length because I believe it is true. Along with the trend toward religion goes the very natural tendency in institutions like ours in a culture like ours, to take hold of this business and organize it along efficient mass production lines—to take everybody in in the enthusiasm of a new movement in education. I think that Viereck is right in warning us of the dangers in too rapid success in this field. I have suggested in my negatives that success is not going to confront us tomorrow; that we have not succeeded yet in building solidly in college and university a Christian education.

IV

I do not want to waste your time and bore you by trying to identify what I think are the reasons for our current difficulty. But I would like to turn to positive exhortation. What can the Christian professor do? I think he can, at the very least, engage in guerrilla warfare. He can give his individual testimony in a confident voice. He can get over delicate reticence about the fact that he is a Christian, and he can proclaim this fact on every appropriate occasion. I believe that this individual warfare rooted in a personal faith can be effective only as we join hands with like minded colleagues to encourage every program on the college campus which will build foundations upon which the solid structure of Christian education can stand in the years to come.

What are some of these programs? I believe that the program of general education, rescued from superficiality, given the quality of gusto it can achieve, is an opportunity for the person who wishes his colleagues to get ready for a type of education that can justifiably be called Christian. Serious grappling with the problem of so-called general education courses forces us to talk to each other

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about the value of particular subjects. The question of ends and goals inevitably comes under discussion. The judicious appraisal of the significance of one subject over against another one makes the discussion of human values a legitimate enterprise for a curricular committee. It is only when we get into the realm of value that we have a chance to set an attitude of mind in the faculty which will make religious and Christian education a possibility. So, as a Christian, I am a champion of general education. It doesn't provide answers. It doesn't give us formulas. But it opens doors into important areas. It gives us a chance to carry on the discussion of curriculum at a level above that of previous generations.

V

I would support, in the second place, every proposal that came to my attention that suggested that we should have formal study of values, in any and all areas in the curriculum. Aesthetic values, economic values, social values, intellectual values—values here, there, and everywhere are too often ignored in the formal courses of study in terms of their importance for human beings. They cannot as easily be brushed aside as can the direct plea for adequate study and teaching of religion itself. If I have no personal vested interest in a department that suggested that it might offer a course in this area, I would still try to be generous enough to support it. I would like to see values dragged in all along the line; see them discussed and studied. I would hope that somewhere in this deluge of courses, the question of human nature with reference to which ultimately these values are justified, be given general presentation to the student body. I would like to see Christian professors hound curriculum committees and force them to ask and answer questions about the purpose of the curriculum. Why do we study what we study? For what purpose are freshmen taught this subject? These are questions that lead us a long way toward religious questions. There is nothing more important for us in the struggle for religious education than the structure of the curriculum and its content. There must be a definition of goals. What is it going to contribute to the student and how do we, as a faculty, justify these goals?

Actually, this is the area where our sins are many. If we took our vocation religiously as college and university professors, would we make a course of study on the basis of the balance of power and the number of votes in the college faculty? Would we endure the situation that allows a decision as to whether a student shall have any knowledge of biological science depending upon whether or not the English Department and the Department of Sociology can out-vote the combination of biological sciences and the physical sciences in the faculty meeting? We make decisions in regard to the courses of study that are of tremendous importance for the well-being of our students, and yet time and time again we refuse to make a course of study which satisfies any group in the faculty by resorting rapidly and casually to compromises that cannot be justified rationally, educationally, or morally. I would exhort the Christian professor to sensitize his conscience in regard to the basis for decision as to the curriculum of his institution.

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The tendency is for departments to combine with departments to vote against any change in the present requirements for fear that any change of any kind might result in a departmental offering being removed from the list. Then we wouldn't have as many students. Wicked administration would fire the faculty member because there wasn't enough tuition income, and this must not be allowed to happen. We don't say these things, maybe we don't even think them all the way through, but how do we test the purity of our motives in regard to curriculum building? And with reference to what values that are wider than Chemistry, more inclusive than English Literature do we make the decision as to how much of what will be offered the students? Unless the decision is made with reference to some set of values that commend themselves to a faculty group, we are acting illogically—I think usually, immorally—and in breach of trust in regard to our charges. We must take our work seriously, religiously, when we build curriculums.

VI

Let me suggest another way that I believe the individual Christian professor can begin the process, or hasten the process, of developing Christian education. I suggest that the serious and responsible professor owes his student two bits of information at the beginning of his course. First, I think he owes it to the student to tell him as honestly as he can the positive and negative limits of his subject; this is, to draw a line around it. To say, if I may quote one of my colleagues, "My subject doesn't include everything. It ends about here, and there are other areas of knowledge that study other things". This is a sort of simple honesty, it seems to me, which may be omitted from the presentation of an introduction to a subject through oversight, or through carelessness but which must be there if the student is to be realistically and honestly introduced to it. In the second place, I think the religious teacher ought to add his personal appraisal of the significance of his subject for human beings. What does he think is the place of the subject matter in his personally organized set of values? Is it the most important thing in his life? Is it the most important thing in all human lives? Is it purely a service function for the development of some skill which may be useful in making a living? How does it fit in and why is making a living important? It seems to me that the person with religious devotion ought to be willing to stand up and testify once, at least, at the beginning of his course as to the place in his own thinking and devotion that his subject matter takes. Why am I content to teach the Greek of the New Testament period? It seems to me legitimate for a student to ask me why I am willing to teach this course. What I say about the set of values that I have, and the way teaching the Greek of the New Testament period fits into that, will tell him, I think, something about the Greek of the New Testament period as well. I cannot escape the feeling that this is a legitimate occupation for the most distinguished professor in the world if, at the same time, he is a religious individual. He will not be speaking primarily as a professor of New Testament Greek when

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he says "This is where it fits in to what I think is important". He will be talking as an individual, but he is in the class as an individual, too. If he makes explicit to the student those matured judgments that have made him content with his life's work, he will have contributed to the student's understanding of what an education is, and of what an educated man is, and of how mastery of a particular subject fits into some pattern of human values. We will have Christian education when the overwhelming majority of the members of the faculty of a particular institution have a Christian vocation to teach and are able to relate that rationally and significantly to their work as teachers.

I think this time is still a long way off. Jesus said "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a mustard seed". What is happening here and now may not be big, it may not be showy; there are no royal guards. But I believe that if you throw yourself into the causes and programs that arise on your own campus to help to develop them; that if you move in the direction of establishing interdepartmental understanding and cooperation and contribute to the study and concern for values, religious convictions will become wholesome, natural and significant factors in college life. That also will be the kingdom.

The great creative masterpieces and the great educational institutions of the past and the present were privately sweated for and bled for. I have frequently pled for humility as a great Christian virtue: a virtue which I believe is, in some way or other, God on earth. Yet, as a citizen of the academic world there is one thing I am proud of—that I bear on my body scars painfully won to help prepare a way for my Lord.

Divine Purpose and Human History

E. HARRIS HARBISON



S HISTORY IN THE HANDS OF GOD—or of Man—or of Nature? The Odyssey of the Western mind in its search for the meaning of history could be written in terms of these three questions. Are we to view the development of societies and civilizations, the elaboration of technologies and cultures, the creative acts and crucial events of human history as the works of a personal divinity, or of man himself, or of natural process? Long before the birth of Christ, each of these three major conceptions of the character and meaning of history had been sketched out by Hebrew and Greek thinkers.

To the Hebrew prophets, history was the work of God. Time was the medium in which Jahweh worked out and revealed his will—choosing and guiding his People, comforting or chastising them, commanding, advising, warning, and saving them. As Hebrew thought matured, history as prophets and chroniclers saw it acquired direction and purpose through the refinement of three fundamental conceptions: Creation, the Covenant, and the Day of Judgment. By the time of the Exile, the vision of a universal history of all mankind, with a definite beginning and end, guided to its goal by a personal deity who is both just and merciful, was fully outlined in the glowing poetry of Second Isaiah.

To the first great historians of ancient Athens in the following century, history was primarily the work of man. To be sure, the Greeks were always uneasily aware of divine intervention and natural forces in human history. But history to them was essentially the deeds of men, who were free within certain limits to create or destroy, progress or regress, as their own intelligence or ignorance, their own desire or indifference might dictate. Human behavior follows certain patterns, Thucydides believed; by the careful study of these patterns in all the richness of their concrete detail, men can learn from their own past how to conduct themselves in the future with similar situations recur—as they will. Men make their own history, and at the same time can learn from it.

Finally, some Greek thinkers were haunted by the thought that history is perhaps nothing more than blind, ineluctable, natural process, impervious to all wishful interference by God or man. This view lurks behind Herodotus' picture of the vast pendulum-like swing of political power from East to West and back again, behind the Greek dramatists' conception of Fate, and behind Stoic and Epicurean thought about history.

In other words, the three views that history is the work of God, the creation of man, or the movement of nature were each adumbrated during the millenium before Christ. There has hardly been a time in Western history when each of the three has not been a live alternative as a key to the meaning of history, and each is alive today. But as we think back over European history, it appears as if the

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three conceptions have succeeded each other chronologically as the dominant ways of understanding history, if we allow always for periods of mixture and overlapping.

I

From Augustine almost to Bossuet, the theological interpretation of history ruled men's minds. History was the record of divine providence in a very direct and literal sense. Against any theory of aimless and fortuitous coincidence of events on the one hand, or of iron determinism or regular cyclical recurrence on the other, Christian thinkers insisted that history is to be thought of as destiny, the purposeful providing and pre-destining of the God who had created the universe, who had incarnated Himself in a man at a particular time and place, and who would some day bring history to its appointed end in final judgment. There was a simplicity and grandeur about this sense of history as the drama of salvation which explains and justifies its hold on the European mind for over a thousand years. It is difficult to see how the struggling frontier society which succeeded the collapse of Roman society in the West would have had the heart to continue and eventually become the confident and dynamic civilization we call "Western" without the theology of history for which St. Augustine more than any other individual was responsible. For a good many generations before Augustine wrote the *City of God*, men had put their trust in the "Eternal City" of Rome. Even some Christians of Augustine's day had recently become convinced that the Hebrew Prophecies of an age of peace and righteousness were being realized before their very eyes in the Christianized Rome of Constantine and his successors. And yet in 410 A.D. Eternal Rome, Christian Rome, was obviously disintegrating, a helpless victim of internal dissension and barbarian attack. It was at this moment that Augustine caught the imagination of Christians with a conception of history as the work not of man nor of nature, but of God. The end of Rome would not mean the end of history. The meaning of history was not *Romanitas*; the goal of history was not the *Pax romana*. What was really going on in history was the grim, mysterious struggle of two half-visible societies, the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*. This struggle would continue under God's providence until each "ran on and ran out to their separate proper and merited ends."¹

The strength of Augustine's theology of history lay in its ambiguity. He was careful not to identify the *civitas Dei* with the Church and the *civitas terrena* with the State. So far as human judgment was concerned, these were invisible societies. But there was just enough ambiguity in the 22 books of the *City of God* to allow later thinkers to identify the *civitas Dei* with the Medieval Church, the invisible company of the saints with the *respublica Christiana* of the Medieval Popes. In his strictures on Roman virtues as simply "splendid vices", Augustine had come close to separating secular history and the history of salvation. By a kind of dynamic

¹See T. E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XII, (June, 1951), p. 372 and *passim*.

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misinterpretation, the Middle Ages brought them together again, by historicizing the *civitas Dei* and identifying it with the Roman Church.

The cost of this misinterpretation was heavy, however. Augustine's theology of history was a healthy corrective to the excesses of a classical historiography which stopped short with man and nature in its search for meaning in history. But this Augustinian view was now enthusiastically taken over by a society which had lost much of the rich and concrete knowledge of man and nature which the Greeks had possessed. So far as empirical knowledge of man and his behavior is concerned, the average medieval chronicle or saint's life suffers terribly by comparison with Thucydides or Tacitus. The best of medieval theology has weathered well, but even the best of medieval historiography is unread today except by specialists. God is certainly lord of history in Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, in the monastic chronicles, or in the saints' lives of the *Golden Legend*. But his lordship often appears to consist in meaningless miracles, capricious interventions in human affairs, and acts of power whose meaning is exhausted in their relationship to the good of the visible Roman Church. The Reformation did something to restore the profundity and grandeur of Augustine's conception of history as the work of God, but as in the case of the Hebrew chroniclers, Protestant historians were never quite worthy of the prophetic insights upon which their religion was based. It has always been easier for theologians than for working historians to write convincingly of history as the work of God.

II

History as the work of man was the dominant conception in European historiography from Machiavelli to Gibbon. It was part protest against medieval historical writing, part return to the insights of the ancient historians, and part original creation. To Machiavelli man is alone in his world, his *virtu* pitted against a *fortuna* which appears variously as chance, caprice, and fate, but never as personal deity. Man is primarily a political animal, and history primarily the history of politics. Machiavelli was certainly no optimist about human nature, but he did believe that man could learn by studying the patterns of political behavior revealed by the past and could apply his learning to practical politics. Those who came after him grew far more optimistic. The historical philosophers of the Enlightenment pulled Augustine's Heavenly City down to earth and anchored it firmly in time and space. The spiritual progress from Creation to Last Judgment envisaged by Augustine was transformed into human progress, and man took God's place on the driver's seat of history. Past history appeared to Voltaire as simply the record of man's crimes and follies, now that man had discovered the clue to progress in the right use of reason in scientific method. Condorcet perfectly expressed the intoxicating enthusiasm and confidence in man of his generation: "No bounds have been fixed to the improvement of human faculties; the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; the progress of this perfectibility, henceforth above

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the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe—The course of this progress may be more or less rapid, but it can never be retrograde."

How strangely similar this absolute confidence in man is on the surface to Augustine's absolute confidence in God as the lord of history! In neither case is there any need for worry about the ultimate outcome, in Condorcet's case because history is in man's own hands, in Augustine's, because history is in God's.

The historiography of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment probed and exploited the weaknesses of the theological interpretation of history. Machiavelli did not argue against Providence, he simply ignored it. He was interested only in human motives and this-worldly causes. "All armed prophets have conquered," he wrote laconically, "and unarmed ones have failed;" "men more easily forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony;" "men do not believe themselves sure of what they already possess except by acquiring still more;" "only those defences are good, certain, and durable, which depend on yourself alone and your own ability." The tone of these maxims suggests what medieval historiography had lacked: a shrewd, realistic, empirical knowledge of the workings of human nature in social and political relationships. The Enlightenment attacked the older theory of Providence more directly. Bossuet's theological interpretation of world history up to Charlemagne was already considerably rationalized to conform to the temper of its age, but Voltaire mercilessly ridiculed even this rationalized version of the *civitas Dei*: What possible reason is there for us to believe that God "chose" that miserable people, the Jews, he asks; or did God lead Alexander on to the conquest of the Near East simply to establish some Jewish second-hand dealers in Alexandria, as Dr. Pangloss insisted he did?

What I am suggesting is that we cannot count the overthrow of the Augustinian conception of history in the eighteenth century as pure loss, even from the Christian point of view. Surely we today can learn more about "divine purpose and human history" from Gibbon than from the *Golden Legend*—in spite of Gibbon's sardonic purpose of describing "the triumph of barbarism and religion" in the fall of his beloved Rome. In contrast with many other religions, Christianity is a profoundly "this-worldly" religion. When its conception of history loses touch with the world of man in all its concreteness and complexity, when the workings of God in history are reduced to miracle and caprice, then no fully adequate theory of divine purpose in human history can be developed.

III

The view of history as the work of man, which reached its climax in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, exaggerated the freedom and power of man not only with respect to God but also with respect to nature. Nowhere in Condorcet's view of history which we have quoted was there any understanding of the relentless pressure of natural forces on mankind, of the organic development of

institutions, of the mysterious concatenation of events which so often appears automatic and utterly beyond the control of human purpose. Conscious of these deficiencies, historians of the next century developed views of the past which, in spite of differences, agreed in emphasizing evolutionary development, natural processes, and what were called "historical forces." Various sorts of determinisms became fashionable—geographical, biological, psychological, and economic. History, which had already slipped from the hand of God, now slipped from the grasp of man into the control of natural process. So long as belief in progress remained vigorous, there was no loss of optimism. What man no longer could do by himself, evolution would do for him. Carl Becker has wittily described this transition from Providence to human progress to evolution in his essay on "Progress" in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*: the Bible says, and the Middle Ages agreed, that man cannot add a cubit to his stature by taking thought; the eighteenth century insisted that he could; the nineteenth maintained that cubits would be added to his stature whether he took thought or not.

In Marx's dialectical materialism, history is not shaped directly by natural environment but by a kind of intermediate environment created by man in his peculiar capacity as the one animal who produced his means of subsistence. This intermediate environment is created, but not really controlled by man. It develops and changes according to laws and forces which have only the most tenuous relation to human consciousness and intention—if they have any at all. "In the social production of their subsistence," Marx wrote in his *Critique of Political Economy*, "men enter into determined and necessary relations with each other which are independent of their wills. . . . The sum of these production-relations forms the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which a juridical and political superstructure arises, and to which definite social forms of consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material subsistence conditions the social, political, and spiritual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of men which determines their existence, but on the contrary it is their social existence which determines their consciousness."

Here again we encounter a boundless confidence and assurance in the outcome of history, but now it is because history is delivered from the control of either God or man into the powerful grip of "dialectical materialism". The *Communist Manifesto* moves relentlessly from its magisterial opening judgment that all history is the history of class struggles through what has happened, what is happening, and what is going to happen, with absolutely unruffled conviction. "The advance of industry," Marx writes, "whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their involuntary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." The Revolution then is a kind of Second Coming, the Classless Society

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a sort of millenium, the bourgeoisie are the ungodly, and the proletariat the righteous. The City of God is now a sure bet precisely because its advent depends neither on God nor on man, but on the historical dialectic itself. There is no hint whatever of personal significance or personal purpose, whether human or divine in the process. All is "involuntary", "inevitable". The greatest reproach Marx can throw up against rival socialist systems is their "total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history," as he puts it—that relentless tramp of faceless feet marching blindly into utopia through no will of their own.

Again it is dangerous to say that the overthrow of Condorcet's optimism about history as the work of man by this sort of conception was unalloyed loss. The materialist view of history is of course a grotesque caricature of reality. But Marx's insistence upon the determining influence of methods of production upon social institutions and intellectual movements, his shrewd observation that all ideas are in some sense "ideologies", that is, rationalizations of class interest, his sense for the vast inertial forces and inevitabilities in the historical process—all these are valuable and integral parts of our twentieth-century view of the past—and they are not incompatible with a Christian conception of human nature. Just as Bossuet's account of Rome seems naïve in comparison with Gibbon's, so Gibbon may seem naïve in comparison with Rostovtseff's work on the economic and social bases of Roman society, which owes a typical indirect debt to the economic interpretation of history. There is a sense—a very real sense—in which our understanding of the richness and complexity of the human past has expanded and deepened since Augustine wrote the *City of God*. We have lost much; but the loss is partially balanced by gain.

IV

It is only against such a background as this, I believe, that it is possible to understand the revival of interest in the Christian understanding of history which is such a striking mark of our present generation. The twentieth-century literature on "Christianity and History" is already large, and it is still growing. It is obviously impossible to describe it here.² But we cannot avoid asking what its origins are and what its general significance may be.

Obviously the revival of Christian interpretations of history springs primarily from disillusionment with theories of history as the work of man or as the product of blind process. We have gone through two world wars of unprecedented violence and now cower in the shadow of a third, which may destroy every major city in the world. No wonder that the optimism of such views as those of Condorcet or Marx rings today on our ears with such hollow irony. No wonder that Augustine seems more intelligent and intelligible to us than he seemed to Gibbon. For the first time in several centuries, the meaning of history seems to be more comprehensible to those who take God seriously than to those who do not.

²The present writer has offered a brief survey in "The 'Meaning of History' and the Writing of History," *Church History*, Vol. XXI, no. 2 (June, 1952), pp. 3-13.

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It cannot be emphasized too strongly, however, that this is no mere revival of the older theological interpretation of history. Renaissance are always to some extent revolutions, born of the peculiar circumstances of the moment. It is impossible literally to revive Augustinian conception of history because it is impossible to wipe from the historical slate the permanent achievements of later historiography and return to St. Augustine's thought-world. What the best of our contemporary Christian theologians and historical philosophers are trying to do, it seems to me, is to apply Christian insights to the understanding of history in the light of the varied and fascinating empirical knowledge of man and natural process which we have acquired since the Renaissance of the fifteenth century. Barth and Brunner, Berdyaev and Dawson, Toynbee and Butterfield, Tillich and Niebuhr, each in his own way, are trying to develop a modern Christian theory of Providence which takes account of all that historical study has taught us about man and time in the past three or four centuries.

In this attempt, as each of them soon discloses, the central problem is the classical theological problem of God's revelation and concealment. To what extent is the divine purpose in history "totally other", and so totally unintelligible to man? To what extent on the other hand, is God's will revealed in events? Even if we take seriously the Hebraic-Christian idea of a God who works in history—who chooses and chastises, suffers and redeems—we still must solve anew for ourselves the problem implicit in Luther's phrase *Die Verborgenheit Gottes*, the hiddenness of God. To what extent is God revealed, to what extent concealed, in events?

Events to a Christian must have a quality of uniqueness, of once-for-all-ness. Christ came "in the fullness of time", "died once for our sins, and rising again, dies no more." The Incarnation and Resurrection together constituted the central *Kairos* of history, but if this was a truly unique event, then all events are unique, and time is a straight line sequence of unrepeatable occurrences. "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide . . . and that choice goes by forever. . ."

From Amos to Reinhold Niebuhr, the prophets of the Hebraic-Christian tradition have attempted to read "the signs of the times", to discern the *Kairos*, to sense the significance of the particular moment. That this tendency is authentically rooted in the New Testament, Oscar Cullmann has recently shown us in his brilliant essay, *Christ and Time*. The divine purpose to a Christian is not a generalized intent which can be reduced to a formula, a law, or a vision—as it might be to a Hindu, a Buddhist, or a Platonist. It is a *will revealed in persons and events*. "I hazard the prophecy," Whitehead once wrote, "that that religion will conquer which can render clear to popular understanding some eternal greatness in the passage of temporal fact."⁸ But precisely what is the "eternal greatness" in any given historical fact, and what does it reveal of God's purpose? It is peculiarly difficult for the twentieth-century Christian to discern the hand of God in the extraordinarily complex pattern of events and forces which three centuries of sophisticated historical study have revealed to us.

⁸*Adventures of Ideas*, p. 41.

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I think I have said enough to suggest that any Christian understanding must steer carefully between overemphasizing the hiddenness of God and overstressing the revelation of God in events. Some contemporary theologies of history come close to saying that the divine will can never be revealed in any meaningful sense at all in specific secular events. Others come close to saying that the religious significance of certain historical events is as plain as the nose on your face. It is hard to say which is the more dangerous tendency. The first may lead to separation between the sacred and the secular so sharp as to preclude any discussion whatever of "divine purpose in human history" and end in despair. The second may lead to the facile identification of divine will and historical event superficially considered. The first is eloquently expressed by Karl Löwith when he writes, "There never has been and never will be an immanent solution of the problem of history, for man's historical experience is one of steady failure. . . . The importance of secular history decreases *in direct proportion* to the intensity of man's concern with God and himself A 'Christian history' is non-sense."⁴ The second was coarsely expressed by Adolf Hitler the day he entered Vienna in the *coup d'état* of March 1938: "Within three days the Lord struck the former rulers of this country", he shouted to the crowds; "everything that has happened must have been pre-ordained by Divine Will."

It is obviously not enough simply to believe that history is in the hands of God. The content and quality of such a belief are the important things. There is often more reverence, more humility, and more profundity in the historical conceptions of some Machiavellians and Marxists than there is in the bloody providential theories of parts of the Old Testament and some medieval chronicles. Oliver Cromwell had a way of seeing divine dispensations in current events such as battles, but at this distance it is somewhat more difficult for us than for him to be sure that God was on the side of Independency and the New Model Army.

It is also not enough, however, to believe that God is dead and that history is in the hands of men or of natural forces. With all its faults and possibilities of perversion, the Hebraic-Christian tradition still offers mankind the profoundest and most satisfying understanding of history of all the alternatives offered thus far. Man never seems to rise to his fullest stature when he thinks of himself simply as man—or as animal. He comes into his own only when he thinks of himself as a creature of God and his history as the work of God.

More than any other in our generation, Herbert Butterfield, the Cambridge historian, seems to me to come close to reconstructing a truly Christian theory of Providence, while doing justice at the same time to the views of history as in some real sense the work of man and the work of nature. Contemporary Protestant theology at its best has a way of taking account of the best in eighteenth-century humanism and nineteenth-century naturalism in formulating a theistic position, and this at least Butterfield tries to do, in simple, non-technical language.

⁴*Meaning in History*, pp. 190-197.

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In all his writings he shows an extraordinarily sensitive feel for natural process, or as he puts it, "that kind of history-making which goes on so to speak over our heads, now deflecting the results of our actions, now taking our purposes out of our hands, and now turning our endeavors to ends not realized."⁵ This is the aspect of history upon which Marx and other determinists have cast so much light. But to Butterfield this aspect is an aspect of the work of Providence, mysterious but still meaningful.

In the same way he shows a remarkable sensitivity to the aspect of history as human creativity and human free-will. In a striking figure he compares the human story to "a piece of orchestral music that we are playing over for the first time." You and I can only see and understand our own part as we play it—say, the second clarinet part. We cannot see the plan of the whole composition until we finish, although we can guess at it from what we have played. Any note we play gains meaning only as it sounds in harmony with those of the other players and continues melodic and harmonic lines already laid down. But "even this analogy is not sufficiently flexible," he says, "to do justice to the process of time; and to make the comparison more authentic we must imagine that the composer himself is only composing the music inch by inch as the orchestra is playing it; so that if you and I play wrong notes he changes his mind and gives a different turn to the bars that come immediately afterwards, as though saying to himself: 'We can only straighten out this piece of untidiness if we pass for a moment from the major into a minor key'".⁶ This is a striking figure, and I am not sure that it is not Pelagian heresy! But it is surely a profound and exciting attempt to reconcile free-will and predestination, history as the work of God, in a modern metaphor. Butterfield asks us "to think of history as though an intelligence were moving over the story, taking its bearings afresh after everything men do, and making its decisions as it goes along."⁷

He ends by insisting, as I have insisted, on the meaning which Christians must inevitably sense in concrete historical events. "Every instant is 'eschatological', or as one person has put it, like the point in the fairy-story where the clock is just about to strike twelve. On this view there can be no case of an absentee God leaving man at the mercy of chance in a universe blind, stark, and bleak. And a real drama—not a madman's nightmare or tissue of flimsy dreams—is being enacted on the stage of all human history—a real conflict between good and evil is taking place, events do matter, and something is being achieved irrespective of our apparent success or failure."⁸ Whether "what is being achieved" is essentially a story of divine *power* working invincibly for the victory of righteousness, or of divine *love* suffering unendingly and drawing men freely, by "faith given freely" as Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisito puts in—this is the central paradox of the Christian religion, and I must leave its solution to those who are better theologians than I.

⁵*Christianity and History*, p. 94.

⁶*Ibid.*, 94-95.

⁷*Ibid.*, 109.

⁸*Ibid.*, 121.

The Concert

WILLIAM B. BAKER

We need nothing quite so much as clarity
Clarity of execution, a purity of tone,
A consciousness of form
The manuscript is never smeared
Each note, each phrase is clear
But unskilled eyes and lips and fingers
Misinterpret harmonies and misconstrue the lyric line

Not by power, nor by might, but by my spirit:
Note by note, phrase on phrase
And measures measureless are added to the score
Worlds whirl endlessly in space
In space they whirl in perfect consonance
And music, music floods the universe

After solemn chords marked *Grave*
We introduced a major theme
But when we brought the exposition to a close
The only fit configuration
Was an agonized codetta in a minor mode
Worlds whirl endlessly in time
In time they whirl in perfect consonance
But not by power, nor by might
Does music flood the universe

The development goes badly
Unskilled eyes and lips and fingers
Badly mangle gracious themes
When unskilled fingers create unexpected dissonance
The resolution may be strange and harsh
Almost chaotic to the untrained ear
But only by my spirit
Can disordered sequences and rhythms be set right

The late William B. Baker was Academic Assistant of Emory at Oxford, a four year Junior College in Oxford, Georgia. This poem was written on June 17, 1954, less than a month prior to his death. It was inspired by the quotations from Butterfield in Professor Harbison's paper.

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Symbols flow beneath the cosmic pen
The themes diminish and expand
A fugal passage hurls the subject
Through a storm of counterpoint
How shall this tumult be resolved?
How shall we bring the movement to a close?

Not by power, nor by might, but by my spirit:
Measures measureless rush toward a slow reprise,
A long last statement of the theme
And then
A tacit peace upon the threshold of eternity

Worlds whirl endlessly in space and time
In space and time they whirl in measured consonance
And music, music floods the universe
Not by power
Not by might
But by my spirit

The Christian Reply to Communism

J. ARTHUR FUNSTON



WE NEED NOT BE REMINDED that we live in perilous times. If man is to be saved he must know the nature of the dangers which beset him. If Christianity has an answer to the challenge of Communism, it must know what that challenge is, and it must move men to take energetic action appropriate to the danger and in conformity to the dictates of their faith.

What, then, is the Communist challenge? We would be purblind to ignore its military and conspiratorial threat in the immediate present. Fundamentally and in the long run, however, it is a gigantic effort to capture the human spirit and to render inadequate its capacity and will to resist. It is a revolutionary faith which inspires and sustains; it is an organized discipline which drives men to act; and it is a power system which seeks world domination.

II

Communism's amazing and terrifying expansion is not to be explained exclusively in terms of military conquest, mistaken national policies or the errors of any particular statesman. It moved into many areas with comparative ease when the situation was ripe, and it fastened its hold on millions of people by default. It had a positive philosophy; it had the answers; it knew where it wanted to go; it had zeal and grim determination; it promised liberation; it denounced injustice. Where it did not succeed in winning active converts it frequently won through the apathy and bewilderment of people who had lost all sense of direction and hope—who had, in a word, no faith to guide them.

Dialectical materialism filled the void, supplied the answers, removed the doubts, revived the hopes, and organized the energies of millions who had been untouched or unmoved by traditional Christianity. It is this philosophy which is the most sinister menace of our era. It is a gospel of unadulterated materialism, holding that life in the last analysis is the reflection of the modes of production. Communists claim that this view is realistically scientific, not superstitiously religious, and that, as a science, it offers the only correct explanation of the past, evaluation of the present, and prediction for the future. It is the complete Truth and is bound to prevail.

This philosophic challenge, denying the basic assumptions of all religious faith, does not stop here. It champions relativistic morality; it announces that the end justifies the means; it prophesies the inevitability and proclaims the desirability of class hatred and conflict; it advertises its intention of encouraging world revolution; finally, it holds out the promise of redemption when the materialist millenium will be ushered in, exploitation end, wars cease, and mankind completely and finally liberated. While its essential materialism and immorality deaden man's finer sensibilities, the glitter of many Communist goals serves to disguise this. It is dangerous, in part at least, because it superficially seems so good.

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Communism has seized the minds of many people and has endowed them with a passion which Christianity has generally not been able to do in modern times. Arthur Koestler describes the feeling which he must have shared with many fellow-converts:

"I became converted (to Communism) because I was ripe for it and lived in a disintegrating society thirsting for faith. . . . Something shook me like a mental explosion. . . . There is now an answer to every question, doubts and conflicts are a matter of the tortured past. . . . Nothing henceforth can disturb the convert's inner peace and serenity—except the occasional fear of losing faith again, losing thereby what alone makes life worth living."¹

In a world in which materialism had already undermined religious faith and organized religion had often ignored or rationalized injustice, dialectical materialism seemed to make sense. In intellectual circles where religion was often distainfully regarded as irrational it had a peculiar fascination, especially among those idealistic humanists with a sensitivity to injustice and a compassion for the under-privileged. Its appeal has not been limited, though. To the lonely the movement offered fraternity; to the frustrated it meant integration; to the guilty, absolution; to wearied skeptics, satisfying dogmatic finality; to starved and empty hearts it offered the Great Cause, made even more alluring for many by the expectation of sacrifice and the opportunity for martyrdom; to the embittered, it beckoned with opportunities for power and, maybe, for revenge. To all it guaranteed Peace, Freedom, and Justice—eventually.

We overlook or discount this aspect of the Communist challenge at our peril. It is a body of believers redeemed from error and dedicated to spread the new faith by any means dictated by the party priesthood. Nothing above the Party; nothing outside the Party; nothing but the Party. The Party demands total allegiance, unquestioning obedience, unequivocal commitment. It is not just a club, or a political party, or a reform movement to which some passing attention may be given. It is one's whole life. The zeal of the faithful gives Communists the power to triumph especially if they are met by apathy, irresolution, division, and a cynicism which knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Whatever the immediate turn political and military events may take, the values we cherish will disappear unless Christianity can convince men that it has a better, truer vision than Communism and unless the zeal of Christmas can match that of Communists.

III

It is as a system of planned power that Communism offers its most immediate challenge. While the Communist threat is much more than a military one, it is in part just that. While Communism holds that capitalism and its bourgeois state are destined to die, it has organized to hasten the process. Although physical force will not necessarily be used where the risks are too great or where external

¹Richard Crossman, (Ed.), *The God that Failed*, New York: Harper Bros., 1949.

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disintegration indicates ripeness for peaceful penetration and conquest, naked military force will be resorted to whenever and wherever the masters of Communist world strategy consider it expedient. This power plan seeks to foment disunity and discord within and between nations. It diligently exploits every weakness, every inconsistency, every mistake, every stupidity among its enemies.

The sword of international Communism is poised ready to strike or ready to consolidate gains which the mere threat of overwhelming power may deliver to them. The Soviet Union and its satellities have instantly available two hundred thirty divisions, and within thirty days they can put four hundred divisions of well trained and equipped troops in the field, and this is exclusive of non-Soviet Asiatic forces. In the teeth of these facts it is foolhardy to deny the reality of the menace of Communist military power and to fail to comprehend that Communism is a cross between a secular faith and a power drive.

Christianity must expose the falsity and bestiality of Communism's basic assumptions; it must provide an affirmative alternative to it; it must inspire among its disciples a devotion and an enthusiasm which will change the world by treating the sicknesses and healing the sores upon which Communism thrives; if nations use military power to encounter the Communist power threat, Christians will at least insist that it be ethically directed and limited.

We shall not win the allegiance of men by negativism and materialism. Anti-Communism is not enough. Certainly we must know what we are against and why we are against it, but we must above all have a positive faith of our own. If we are honest with ourselves we will face the fact that the faith of professing Christians has been tragically diluted by indifference, empty formalism, and gross secularism. At the very time that men yearn for anchorage millions have remained essentially unresponsive to Christianity.

Christianity must recapture its early vigor. A deepened Christian faith would be a living witness, through the lives of its followers, of the reality of the love of God. It would recognize man's incompleteness and fault and his need for God's grace. Communism blames a defective environment for injustice and predicts an earthly paradise upon the universal collapse of capitalism. Christianity can make no such easy promises, but it can demonstrate the power of service and show that no good society can be founded on proud and evil men in defiance of the need of God's love.

A renaissance of Christian faith would hold aloft an affirmative faith exposing the Communist system as the monument to which power-hungry materialism leads. It would offer human equality and cooperation for class hatred. It would seek world collaboration instead of world conquest. It would promise no shortcuts to a perfect order, but it would try to remove the injustices upon which Communism feeds. Instead of justifying means by ends it would apply the moral law to both.

Revitalized Christianity could not remain in the cloisters. Christians would

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pray with St. Francis; "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy."

IV

This spirit would be manifested in several ways: (1) by respecting the worth of every person; (2) by a sense of stewardship which would minister to the unfortunate everywhere; (3) by efforts to integrate nations into a more closely-knit world community; (4) by a preference for amicable over forcible means of settling disputes; (5) by refusing to buy peace by doing or condoning evil.

Free government is based on the fundamental propositions that the individual person is an end and the state a means and that legitimate government operates basically through persuasion rather than coercion. The Declaration of Independence does not assert that all men *are* equal; it declares that all men are *created* equal. Viewed as the products of God's creation, men cannot rightly be manipulated as tools. There are affronts to dignity to which no person ought to be subjected. Our constitutional safeguards of human rights are implementations of a basic Christian precept.

Conscious of the supreme worth of the individual, Christians cannot remain silent or passive when confronted by injustice. If Americans really respected the dignity of all mankind, they would not find themselves embarrassingly on the defensive on the race issue. While the picture drawn of us by our enemies is a distorted caricature, the fact remains that we should be troubled by that part of the indictment which is true, and we should work unceasingly to achieve full that equality of treatment of all people to which we proudly lay claim. If we did this Communist propaganda would lose much of its sting, and many nations—especially in Asia—would drop much of their skepticism respecting our sincerity and hostility to our policies.

Respect for human dignity would sensitize us to the needs of the poor, the plight of the jobless and homeless, the suffering of the afflicted. We would try to eradicate political and all other kinds of corruption and irresponsibility, and we would be alert to attacks on civil liberties. We would do all that we could to remove the last vestiges of colonialism, racism, and human oppression and injustice in any form. People gripped passionately by Christian love will not merely have a warm glow in the abstract on these matters. They will *do* something personally. Perhaps they can change their business policies, or their teaching methods, or their family life, or their attitude toward their community organizations, or their political outlook.

Christians will shoulder their political responsibilities in different ways and degrees, but the assumption of the duties of citizenship in a free society is a sacred duty. Edmund Burke said: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is

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for good men to do nothing." We have a clear duty to inform ourselves on public affairs, to vote, to participate in politics when called, and to bring to focus on all issues the judgment of a Christian conscience.

In these days many of us are troubled by attacks on our liberties at home. We are dangerously naive if we fail to recognize that the Communist Party is essentially a conspiratorial organization which will try to use every means to destroy us. The treat is real and requires constant vigilance, balanced judgment, and respect for American constitutional processes to meet it.

In the long run the best way to counter this menace is to build a loyalty in men's hearts and a condition of health and vigor in our society so strong that we are for all real purposes immunized against direct subversion. Even so, these efforts, the surest long-term protection, afford inadequate defense against hidden tactics in the immediate present. We are forced to protect ourselves against those who spurn the method of peaceful persuasion upon which free government is based, and we are justified in taking measures to assure integrity and loyalty in the public service.

While agreeing with the necessity for protective action, many of us are deeply disturbed by the kind of action taken and by the frequently personal and political ends by which it appears to be motivated. We are accustomed to weigh the fairness and means as well as the legitimacy of ends. We recoil at the smear, and we are outraged by the inquisitorial tactics which condemn by accusation, which too often fail to distinguish between opinion and action, between non-conformity and treason. We are sickened by failure to extend proper procedural guarantees. We are touched to the quick by innuendo and distortion. These things trouble us because they have demoralized a series of vital agencies in our government; because they have tended to divide our people; because they have encouraged a type of vigilantism which equates treason with controversy; and because they have lowered our prestige abroad and strengthened the Soviet's propaganda arm.

Even if the effects of these vicious tactics were not so apparent, we should still be concerned because of their violation of human dignity. We should be conscious of the issues at stake long before we are personally and directly affected. The democratic life we treasure can perish by our own hand. We must remember that, as Dr. Elton Trueblood has said, the alternative to evil may not be good; unless we are wise it may be another evil.

V

The difficult problem of preserving the balance between individual rights and national security in times of crisis is not easy to solve. I would suggest, however, that in addition to the affirmative measures I have already described, we should:

- (1) Place first reliance on the executive establishment to remove security and loyalty risks.

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- (2) Continue the function of Congressional investigation through Congressional committees but reserve it for extraordinary occasions when results cannot otherwise be obtained.
- (3) Consolidate this particular type of investigation into one joint Congressional investigating committee.
- (4) Provide by Congressional legislation mandatory rules for all congressional investigations.
- (5) Use courts and time-honored court procedures for the trial of those charged with infractions of law.
- (6) Set for ourselves a high standard of ethics for participation in discussion, whether public or private.

If these measures could be adopted they would help to safeguard our institutions against either communist or conformitarian subversion and at the same time fully respect the worth of the individual.

What else will a Christian country do? First, it will use its power and abundance in a spirit of stewardship. Loans and grants, private relief, and Point Four programs are vital. Over half the world's people are now stirred by a realization that their poverty, ignorance, and disease are unnecessary, and they are demanding a better life. Point Four and Technical Assistance programs are in the right direction, but they are not enough. Unless we give something of ourselves because our hearts respond to their condition, the result may be technological progress, but it may also be greater discontent, frustration, and misunderstanding. Christians should inaugurate a Spiritual Assistance Program which would give meaning and direction to technical progress.

Secondly, Christians must help to create a public opinion favorable to the fashioning of a more effectively organized international order. Attempts to create a world state before a sense of community exists are doomed to failure, but this is all the more reason for striving to bridge national and other barriers through cooperation in specific areas. While the present power conflict rages, the United Nations cannot guarantee the peace, although it can provide a useful arena for mediatory efforts. The power struggle will probably continue for some time both in and out of the United Nations. If war can be averted in the immediate future, functional cooperation through the specialized agencies and through such schemes as the European Coal and Steel Community gives promise of laying a practical and solid basis for a wider feeling of community. Meanwhile the United Nations is a halting first step, but it needs our help, and Christians should see to it that we do not retreat.

Thirdly, Christians must prefer amicable over forcible means of settlement. Nobody knows how long the cold war will last, but we do know that the longer it lasts the greater the risk of rash and impetuous acts and policies from which there is no safe return. Therefore every peace overture needs to be seriously examined unless it is clearly a propaganda ruse or thinly disguised blackmail. While we should not buy remission from attack at the cost of forsaking principle, Christians should point out that ultimately negotiation is the only alternative to war and that negotiation and appeasement are not necessarily identical.

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That may sound good, you may say, but how is the Church and how is a Christian to react to armed struggle? Everyone knows that Christians are divided on the ethics of participation in and support of war. Some will say that they cannot support the use of force in any way, for any purpose, at any time; others will draw the line differently. On certain basic matters, though, Christians should be in agreement:

- (1) They should denounce the idea of a preventive war.
- (2) They should point out the danger of conceiving of security in exclusively military terms. A disproportionate emphasis on armaments may, indeed, detract from and incapacitate for other more fundamental programs of defense of freedom.
- (3) While respecting the right of conscientious objection to war, Christians must be spiritually prepared to suffer for the sake of conscience.
- (4) Christians should seek in every way to remove the causes of war and to lay the foundations of peace.
- (5) Christians should conceive of power as a trust to be responsibly held and used. The Church is under heavy obligation to stress that the most enduring power is moral power; that power must never become an end in itself, and that it must be checked.

Today we do indeed stand at Armageddon. We are challenged by a philosophy, by a passion, and by power unprecedented in modern times. Upon the timeliness and effectiveness of the Christian reply to it will depend not alone the freedom of Christians but the dignity of mankind everywhere.

Religion and Philosophy

LEROY E. LOEMKER



RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY: the copula cannot be regarded as simply additive. Unlike the editor of the *Eatonsville Gazette*, who produced an impressive article on "Chinese Metaphysics" by consulting the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, metaphysics under "M", China under "C", and combining his information, we cannot in the Liberal Arts, merely synthesize the two fields by adding the knowledge of two departments. Philosophy and religion obviously do not belong to the same level of discourse, whether in the curriculum or in human experience. The questions with which we are concerned are these: what can philosophy contribute to the Christian education of the college student? What can it contribute to the understanding of the Christian faith?

Certainly philosophy is not a way of salvation. For the spirit bloweth as it listeth, and whatever the mystery of grace, it is obviously true that "it hath not pleased God to save his people through dialectic." Philosophy is no surrogate for faith. It cannot provide Christian truth, without at least the promptings of human experience or human dogma. But faith claims its own authority, and revelation resists, indeed it resents, the unasked probings of the critical mind. According to the gospel Christ confounded the doctors in the temple, and it is widely held that his Word has ever since confounded the doctors—of philosophy—whenever they have, in their foolishness ventured to grapple with the wisdom of God.

We can in fact go further, for philosophers sometimes seem to be quarreling against the unity of truth itself, each measuring the world by the rule of his own system. At best, their theories about God clash. Consider the great voices recently stilled among us. Dewey would abolish religions for the sake of the religious, a common veneration for a very subjective God, the moral tension within us between actuality and the ideals in which we believe. For Santayana, Catholic soul with atheist mind, religion is the poetry in which we believe, his only God the sustaining and creative power of matter. Whitehead has domesticated an Anglican humanism in a world of mathematical and logical order, his trinitarian God being the primordial abode of meaning, the creative power of events, the immortality of those cherished experiences which are no longer ours. Brightman, his uncompromisingly moral yet loving spirit making demands of the Almighty, wrote his students in his last illness, "My faith in God has never been stronger, and I'm glad my reason does not compel me to ascribe the Given to his will." The spectrum of ideas of God extends almost continuously from the extreme subjectivity to objective totality. Yet underneath all there echoes the cry of Zaranthustra, proclaiming the death of God, destroyed by the new powers and loyalties of modern man.

Philosophy, then, cannot as once was held, serve as the guide to life unless it is itself somehow guided. By itself it is too blind, or too narrowly blinkered, to

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lead the blind. And yet are not all these efforts to capture a faith in the nets of some categorial order incomplete interpretations of some deeper religious truth? There is obviously a primacy in faith for which the understanding strives, but which it only partially grasps.

II

Yet the services proffered by philosophy to religion are not therefore superfluous and dispensable. For though *philosophers* differ among themselves in methods, perspectives, and conclusions, there remains the unavoidable human process of *philosophizing*, to make use of Kant's well-known distinction between substantive and verb. Socrates, defending his role and the role of philosophy in the city, said that the unexamined life is not worth a man's living. The examination of one's life through a critical exploration of the principles involved in our experiences, beliefs, deeds, and institutions is inescapable in a liberal education because it is the key to man's freedom. And because Christianity has been a vital creative force in our traditions, and remains a living force in our common life, examined or unexamined, and because it offers the Word, claims truth, demands faith, involves community and therefore communication, it too needs philosophy.

If philosophy be regarded in these terms, the weaknesses in our liberal arts tradition become apparent. Lacking a unity of principles, the Liberal Arts college faces a crisis unparalleled since Europe's universities were first faced with the compelling discoveries of modern science. It is a crisis about truth, beneath this a crisis about reason, and behind this the loss of a unified and constructive conception of man. We have passed from a carelessness about personality, brought about by many intellectual trends, to a phase—how that shrewd old devil Screwtape gloated over this word—a phase in which truth itself seems to have lost its human worth and power. The form of the crisis is, on the one hand, the radical reduction of truth to the empirically verifiable and the technically useful; and on the other hand, in the creative fields in which the humanities are interested, it is a group distrust of reason as abstract conceptualization, incapable of penetrating to a private "existential" realm of meaning which, however profound its personal effects upon the individual in his "situation", is beyond communication save through the hazards of intuitive perception. But the *homo mensura* doctrine, whether in its Protagorean pole in the physical sciences, or its existential pole in the humanities (including recent developments in theology as well), can provide neither proper distribution nor unity to the intellectual content of a liberal education. Neither is adequate to the problems of self-examination and self-knowledge.

This could be spelled out in some contemporary detail. In his recent lectures on *Modern Science and Modern Man*, Dr. Conant expounds scientific empiricism in a moderately positivistic and pragmatic vein. Science is now fused with technology and is successful in "handling nature" and therefore fraught with great powers for the betterment of life. (Dr. Conant apparently continues to interpret these powers optimistically.) But such science is without any cosmological import. This,

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he argues, is all to the good, for it releases religious faith from the pressures of the materialistic and mechanistic constructions of the nineteenth century, and leaves it free to define its own truth.¹ The Judeo-Christian ideals of morality, being thus immune from scientific examination, are secure for us and we will—or at least we can—base our social order upon them, science providing us with the technical mastery of means.

Not all advocates of the scientific method, however, limit science in this way to make for faith. Though John Dewey and the hosts who have followed him are happy to admit that science builds no cosmologies, they have urged the extension of the scientific attitude and method to human values, promising thus (though they have not fulfilled their promise) to verify what is good in human goals by the same method used in verifying means, not by tradition or authority, or even by common consent, but by logical inquiry guided by a goal variously described as growth, cooperative social adjustment, or increasing freedom.² Thus science is expected to provide a full and new social morality without recourse to religious revelation or authority, greater and more ultimate goods being revealed as we strive to achieve lesser ones.

Twentieth century experience fails to sustain either conclusion—the religious neutrality or the morality of science. As many wise men among us are saying, we are in danger precisely because we are growing indifferent or divided about the consensus of moral convictions which have held us together and sustained our institutions, and which are needed to control the power which is ours. An anonymous critic of Toynbee,³ finding fault with his diagnosis that the decline of the West is caused by the loss of its creativity, says in rebuttal that it is

“Rather its success and the fact that its creativity is no longer confined within the limits of a firm moral system that constitutes the crisis of the European culture.”

The sociologist, Robert Lynd, convinced that religion in its traditional forms is a dying reality in current living, concludes that

“Our culture, in its headlong preoccupation with individual money-making has been reckless of the fate of common values and loyalties. American culture . . . needs to discover and to build prominently into its structure a core of richly evocative common purposes which have meaning in terms of the deep personality needs of the great mass of the people.”⁴

If this means anything, it is a call for a generally accepted moral faith adequate to control the power that is ours and to provide order in our social processes. Such a faith must be “existentially” compelling, but it must also be socially significant, politically operative, and culturally corrective in wide public areas of life.

This points directly to the other horn of the dilemma concerning truth. The old distrust of reason in favor of experience appears also in the humanities, as the end product of the left-wing non-Platonic aspect of the Romantic tradition.

¹J. B. Conant, *Modern Science and Modern Man*, Columbia University Press, 1952.

²*Reconstruction in Philosophy*. New American Library ed., 139 *et passim*.

³In the *London Times Literary Supplement*, April 9, 1954, p. 226.

⁴*Knowledge for What?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 228 f.

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The growth of the crisis-theology illustrates this current wave of anti-rationalism in religious doctrine, beginning as it did with positivistic assumptions, but moving readily into line with Heidegger and the existentialist version of the Romantic mood. That the heart has its reasons which the mind cannot know (at least the mind by itself) is certainly true; like the experiences in terms of which positivists would verify scientific hypotheses, the religious experience in its narrowness is solitary, incommunicable, and dilemmatic. Yet just as scientific verification is often in terms of the perception of complex patterns of experience, so religion in its actual manifestations and life involves emotions that are shared, compulsions about which we can deliberate, fruits in art, social order, and character, which can be rationally explored and defended. And here the *reasoning* justification of religion may be found. However profound and intellectually reputable, an appeal to faith validated only in its pure subjectivity, to vision unsupported by critical and practical tests, to "existential discovery" incapable of communication save indirectly and by emotional evocation—such an appeal lacks contact with the broader horizons of daily life of the Christian.

There are thus dangers in Christianity's "new look" of which those of us will be aware who were reared on the "old orthodoxy", and who struggled in vain in the years of our youth to invest religious phrases with experiences to sustain them. The "new orthodoxy" is far more sophisticated than the old, of course, though there are many who would not have it appear so. But to the man in the pew it may well have the effect of once more broadening the gap between Christian faith and the problems of everyday life. If the power of the spirit is bounded by too deeply subjective, anti-cultural, and unintelligible limits, then it cannot help to close the chasm between the great deal that we know and the faint-heartedness with which we undertake to put it to use for good ends. Between irrationality of faith and nominalism of science there lies the widening gap of our secular confusion.

The threefold task of restoring a unified ideal of truth, of developing a conception of reason broad enough to apply to all of the powers of man and their interplay, and of thus restoring our concern for the student as a person, is a task of philosophy.

III

How then can philosophy contribute to the Christian education of the college student? The answer seems to be through a critical evaluation of the Christian faith. Not every student, of course, has an experientially grounded faith; hence the evidences of living Christianity in the college community are all the more needed to make the Christian arguments meaningful. Assuming a pervasive Christian spirit, however, it is in philosophy that the real issues of contemporary faith are encountered and clarified. The following problems, selected from many, seem to be central to its task.

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Philosophy is needed first of all, to clarify the meaning and importance of Christianity for life, in the broader context of all religion. We have just said that one cannot understand Christian experience without having had Christian experiences. Yet it is worth considering the converse relationship as well; Christian experience often has boundaries imposed upon its meaning and fruitfulness by the narrow moral and theoretical conceptions with which the individual approaches his God. How much, for example, of our popular faith is burdened down with coercive magic, with popular materialism, with sub-Christian notions of rewards and punishments. Much religious discourse would today erase wisdom from among the fruits of the spirit.

Even more than other experiences, religious experience requires a cognitive construction to become meaningful, for there is no experience of God analogous to the experience of other beings, whether things, persons, or abstract forms. In religious experience we are aware of the inward pole of a relationship which points in an outward direction but stops in no perceived object. However described, whether as mystical vision, or the feeling of absolute dependence, or the numinous, or confrontation by the Thou, or the sense of conviction and of release, these experiences become explicitly religious when their uniqueness compels us to look toward a spiritual power. They are the effects in terms of which we attribute such qualities as power, justice, mercy, loving-kindness, and holiness to a subject, *God*, who is unknown but adored. "Statements about God", I. M. Crombie says, "are in effect parables which are referred, by means of the proper name God, out of our experience in a certain direction."⁵ Our conceptual crutches, like causality, purpose, design, and such superlatives as the whole, the most perfect, the infinite, may not reach to establish our understanding firmly upon God, but they serve to support and to stabilize our attitudes of reverence, awe, and gratitude which would otherwise rest only upon subjectivity.

But religious experience must be studied also in the total range of its effects—personal, historical, and cultural. Religion has always involved a polarity; the supreme good requires renunciation, but also enhancement, of the valid interests of life. The Christian is called upon to sell all he has to acquire the pearl of great price, yet he is enjoined to seek the Kingdom of God with the assurance that the other things which he needs "shall be added unto him." These "other things" begin with economic changes, include mental health (and disturbances as well), the vitality of political motives and social forces, the historical origins of modern science and law. The most significant fruits of religion, however, are its expression in art and its intensification of moral insight and power. A study of the interlocking human attitudes in Western and other cultures—the religious, the aesthetic, the moral, and the intellectual—might well serve as the crowning, unifying venture of the liberal arts. The triumph of Christianity is the life of the Christian, but the culmination of the critical study of Christianity in relation to the problems

⁵*The Socratic*, #5, 22.

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of life and of history is, or may be, an understanding which reveals the full sweep of the Christian power and divine grace.

This means the second place that we need to make clear the ethical implications of Christianity and its part in supporting the quality of moral concern in the liberal arts program. The relation between religion and morality is by no means unilateral. Conscience, duty, and freedom have always had Christian roots in our Western tradition. Genuine morality is closer to the religious spirit than some theologians are inclined to recognize. As a student once wrote after reading Kant, "No one can fully grasp the categorical imperative without feeling the inclination to worship." Neither mere understanding nor æsthetic rapture can take the place of the compulsions of our loyalty which are the fruitage of the Christian's surrender to God.

A sainted Methodist leader, recently dead, used to lament that he knew too many Methodists whose conversion had involved reconciliation without regeneration. Given the modern conditions of life, there is an underlying danger of complacent resignation beneath the obvious truth that all men are sinners; this fits too well into our acceptance of the virtues of social conformity. But if the effects of world-wide revolution are to be ameliorated and given good directions, the students whom we are now teaching will have, in their lifetimes, to make staggering moral decisions, and to clarify moral ends with a degree of generality which we have not yet achieved. Christian regeneration involves a moral philosophy, and the narrowing alternatives as to whether this philosophy is to be Christian or not are becoming daily clearer.

Philosophy is needed, then, in short, to help the student construct a firm religious faith. Religious experience may be self-validating for him who is caught up in the beatific vision, but the vision is short and the pressures of life are relentless. The enduring strength of Christianity or any other religion is not in the transient experience but in the faith which results and which orders a man's loyalties into a pattern of life. But claiming knowledge, faith must lay claim too upon the conditions of achieving knowledge. A theory of knowledge is involved, and if philosophy is once again to return to its basic task of asking the important questions and defining the conditions on which they can be answered, it must work for a conception of intellectual justification which will find the proper place, but only the proper place, for science, for all forms of symbolic communication, for the felt conviction, for the evaluation of the various modes of human desire and creativity, and for the great questions of life and destiny.

This requires restoring the relation of faith and reason which has been a mark of the humane tradition of letters and learning. In the college we need to reconcile faith and reason in order to fuse the values of our cultural heritage; in life we need them reconciled to bring Christian power to bear upon the full range of our needs and relations.

These contributions of philosophy to a Christian education are to be summed up in a Christian philosophy. Many other problems might be added, such as the

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search for the meaning of history, for a unified interpretation of the nature of man, and for the human meaning of the scientific view of the world. But they all involve the primary service of philosophy in giving the student an ability to use the principles of reason, and to send him in critical quest of a world view. The most valuable service of philosophy to Christian education, it seems to me, is to teach the student that thinking is a process which must be disciplined by objective forms, to awaken him to the range of experiences on which his knowledge is to be based and the range of problems to which this knowledge can be applied, and to put him on the path of constructing his own ordered beliefs about the meaning of life and the world we inhabit. If the effort to do this is carried out in an environment of respect for facts, including religious facts, in a spirit of reverence, and with an avoidance of all religious obscurantism, we need have no misgivings about the likelihood of a growing faith.

IV

What are the applications of this to education? There are, in the traditions of our research and teaching, factors which contradict a Christian commitment. A recent conversation with a German graduate student in the social sciences at one of our universities brought to light his concern at not having achieved the aim which brought him to a Christian university. Interested in the political and economic life of Germany, he had come seeking a consistent answer to give to his German friends who were finding the Communist answer to Europe's problems convincing. "But", he said, "I go to the social sciences and find our moral issues reduced to social conventions. This doesn't help me. Economics discusses human values, but levels them to economic needs and describes them in relation to established types of business organization. I have gone to psychology, to have my questions by-passed because of basic mechanistic assumptions. Such points of view are really more compatible with Communism than with Christianity. I haven't found the Christian answers. In this sense", he concluded, "the University is not a Christian university."

His criticism is, I fear, well founded. If we were Roman Catholics we should have a pattern of answers. Protestantism is individualistic, pluralized, and legitimately permits a variety of intellectual interpretations. But a confusion of contradictory principles is not merely unphilosophical; it is unacceptable to the mind of man. To have a Christian education there must be a Christian community revealing itself in the search for a unified truth, including a reasonable understanding of the Christian life. There must be discourse among the faculty of a Christian college about the inclusive aims and underlying assumptions of our teaching and study.

It follows that philosophy is the business of the entire university. Everyone there must philosophize, and, in fact, everyone does, since the examined life is the theme of our education. But many do it badly, and the first obligation of a department of philosophy is to bring the aid of critical examination to the correction

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of inadequate and inconsistent principles in the teaching program. Three fields for interdepartmental discussion seem to be particularly fruitful as a beginning: the problems of scientific method, of the nature of man, and of the factors and components in man's cultural heritage. Fortnightly sessions devoted to such themes, and perhaps also more specifically, to the problem of a Christian conception of man, of nature, and of history, may help to heal the disunity of principles which hinders the intellectual community implied in a Christian education.

But universities and colleges do not exist merely for the faculty. Students are to be taught. There is needed, of course, a philosophical orientation in religion — a philosophy of religion or, even more specifically a Christian philosophy. I myself prefer a course in the philosophy of religion directed at the students' state of understanding of religion (often near to illiteracy); it is a course based on the historical facts of religion with perspectives far wider than the Hebrew-Christian tradition; it is one which examines the essential components of religion in its historical forms, and involves an interpretation of the unique Christian revelation in this broader context. The classics of religious thought are important, but are to be used with discernment in terms of their contribution to the end of the student's own examination of his beliefs. Christianity can hardly lose by such a study of its answers, its historical failures, and the criteria upon which its claim upon man's belief rests.

Yet the first service of philosophy to the Christian faith is not such a course, but rather the encouragement of habits and attitudes of intelligent understanding. This involves a logic in which the objective forms of thinking are unfolded and the discipline which is the price of reasonableness is taught; an ethics which examines the difficulty, yet the necessity, of establishing the authority of duty and the reasonable determination of the good; and a frontal attack upon the problem of man and the cosmos which will make science meaningful beyond its technological uses, and restore it to its proper place in man's search for wisdom. The issues crucial for Christian thought lie deeper than the study of Christianity. Such are the problem of universals, the problem of time, of order, of freedom, of the good, of change and the abiding, and of substance and individuality, particularly human individuality. Every theology implies answers to these problems, and every science tends to justify or challenge a position regarding them. And the student's judgment about the validity, relevance, or impossibility of Christian beliefs will be limited by the degree of confusion in his mind about them. Therefore, leave to the graduate school all logical technicianship, analytic virtuosity, and critical details in the history of ideas, and invite the college student, aided by the great thoughts of the masters, to try to think his own great thoughts about the cosmos, the power of truth, the creative and redemptive order of the divine.

This may be dangerous to some orthodoxies but hardly to Christian life. We are reading much these days about the return to Christian faith. This fits our sense of crisis and failure, our desire for security and authority, our growing sense of the insignificance of much that we labor to achieve. But our secular

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habits of thought continue without very much change. It is not clear that the new wine now in ferment in our unrest and sense of need will be contained in the old bottles. Charles Morris is proclaiming the approach of a new religion, the Maitreian. Toynbee has his thoughts in precarious balance, it seems, on when a new universal religion will be due. Bultmann, having done his part in convincing us of the role of myth in the gospel, is now urging the need of demythologizing it, and we must admit that, in spite of the difficulty in showing us what remains, he has pointed to crucial difficulties of faith in the modern age. God will continue to create and to judge, and it may well be that the Christian revelation will further free itself of particularism and idolatries, and grow in spread and depth of human application and meaning. Philosophy will not bring this about. But the Word of God, however inwardly it is perceived, must be examined, interpreted, and freed from the limits which man, often through his unreason, imposes on it. This requires spiritual alertness, sensitivity to human need, obedience. But through it all there is also the need of reason, evaluation, an understanding of our capacities and our common life. Hence philosophy!

A Christian Approach to Literature

ROLAND MUSHAT FRYE



HERE IS A MEANINGFUL TALE—doubtless apocryphal, but none the less instructive—about a certain rabid Moslem caliph in Egypt who burned the priceless Alexandrian library, saying: "If all these books agree with the Koran, they are superfluous; if not, they are lies." It is a tight argument, emblematic of a narrowness and bigotry against which everything within us rebels, a narrowness which would subject all beauty, grace, and truth to the most constrained and restrictive of dogmatic manias. Fortunately, however, at least within the bounds of my experience, it is a mania whose major trust is no longer a threat to literary learning. There are still caliphs who would destroy, to be sure, but their ire is differently directed. Indeed, we might aptly say that the inclination of the modern counterpart of our ancient caliph would be to destroy the Koran itself—or, what would be far more destructive, to ignore it entirely. In this sense, the parable of the caliph is a two-edged sword, cutting against both extremes with the same blade.

But our problem today is not with the extremists. Indeed, our primary problem is not to consider any particular group or school of critics or of scholars. It is rather to consider the relationship between the Christian faith and literature. In order to arrive at this consideration fairly, we shall glance at the current state of the problem, without regarding this matter as our end. As will become apparent, it is my judgment that most of the modern approaches to literature—as to life—must be regarded as only partial, and that if there is such a thing as a Christian approach to literature, then a consciously Christian belletristic approach will eschew certain popular contemporary approaches not so much because they are *wrong*—and certainly not because in their intent they are more sinful than most human endeavor—but will eschew them precisely because they are only fragmentary, and because they induce their adherents to ignore or even deny many essential aspects of literary and existential reality.

Within this context, it is clearly mandatory to disavow in the most forceful terms any desire to put a strait jacket of the mind upon any Christian who devotes himself to the study of literature. Nothing could be further from my intent. Indeed, as best I can understand the relevance of the Christian faith to our subject, that relevance will present itself as an ordering and enfranchising influence, and not as restrictive and obstructionist. My attempt, then, will be to consider the subject in terms of a consistent, entire, and intellectually acceptable landscape of reality. To be sure, this approach will involve treating "Christian faith" in a cognitive, rather than in a saving, sense, to employ the distinction of Martin Luther.¹

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¹See James Hastings Nichols, *Primer for Protestants*, New York, 1949, pp. 114-15.

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Because of the renaissance of theology in our time, and of our growing awareness of the intellectual strength and stature of Christian thought, past and present, I feel that we are now in a position to make such attempts at synthesis. The attempts, of course, may fail, even though they are launched from a position which is itself sound and acceptable, but I am sure that they cannot succeed unless they are undertaken within a total, comprehensive and harmonious frame of reference. If the emerging Christian faculty movement, of which we are a part, is to be grounded only in a shallow emotionalism, or in a desire to escape from confusion into the safety of an arid intellectual dogmatism, then it is doomed from the outset. Our valid hope, I suggest, lies in maintaining contact with the full reaches of the Christian landscape of reality, to use Emile Cailliet's apt phrase, and it is in terms of that total, consistent and harmonious outlook that we may see our way. This adherence to the large patterns of Christian thought, if understood rightly, will put no fetters upon us but will free us for the fullest understanding and participation in the life of the mind. Upon this very point, it is surely significant that in that great epic of the Christian pilgrimage, the *Divine Comedy*, Dante expressly indicates that his freedom increases as he approaches the throne of God, and that he is not fully and ultimately free until he stands within the very presence of God.

II

What of the present state of literary studies in relation to Christian thought and life? This question had perhaps best be answered first without relation to the awakening interests and activities of Christian scholars. It cannot be answered, however, nor can we proceed to the fuller consideration of the relevance of Christianity to literary subjects, without also exploring in brief the present state of liberal education in general, with particular reference to the great current emphasis upon the Humanities as evangel. Let us first turn to the state of contemporary relationships between literary studies and religion.

This subject has been most interestingly explored by the late Professor Theodore Spencer of Harvard, in his 1948 study of the points of views dominant in the teaching of English literature to undergraduates.² Spencer's report clearly indicates the extent of the divorce between literary and religious learning. The predominant views varied, he found, from that of religious belief as "an anachronistic background which any serious writer must grow away from, or else . . . a sociological phenomenon, represented by characters like Elmer Gantry, to be exposed as a disreputable sham" and which holds that "the vertical relationships of religion are without meaning,"³ to that position which Spencer describes as the "overreliance on the vatic side of literature," an overreliance which reduces Scripture to the status

²Theodore Spencer, "English Literature" in *College Reading and Religion: A Survey of College Reading Materials Sponsored by the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and the American Council on Education*, New Haven, 1948, pp. 164-84.

³Spencer, p. 173.

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of literature and exalts literature to the position of Scripture.⁴ One typical attitude was expressed by the chairman of the English department in a midwestern state university who said that his faculty, on the whole, were not particularly concerned with the doctrines of religion, but were interested rather in "humane values, of which they might consider religious values, in a narrow sense, only a segment."⁵

Spencer also reports upon a study of representative textbooks, in one of which he found that the introductory material on medieval literature so totally ignored the religious background as to appear to an impartial observer "like the description of a dynamo in which all mention of electricity is omitted."⁶ He further refers to introductory sentences on Milton's *Paradise Lost* which tell the student that he may disregard the theology of the poem, to which Spencer remarks that "an obedient student, reading these words, will be more convinced than his environment has already tended to make him that religion is of no importance and that a great religious writer like Milton is of value chiefly as a painter of landscapes."⁷

Spencer's study indicates the weakness of much secular education, when it ignores or minimizes the centrality of the Christian tradition in our cultural heritage. In some circles quite drastic positions are taken, and there is a sophistical suspicion of all religious and ethical systems, as some academicians isolate themselves ever more rigorously from the major problems of the common life of man. Such isolation, for professors of literature, may be found either in purely historical scholarship, or in purely aesthetic criticism, insofar as either interest is pursued from that position which Douglas Bush refers to as the "foggy pinnacle beyond good and evil."⁸ Thus, whether we as individuals prefer the scholarly or the critical emphasis, and indeed even though we may effectively combine the two, we must surely avoid seeking knowledge without judgment or beauty divorced from truth. The adherents of both of these partial positions are, I think, well described in the words of one of Lewis Mumford's Stanford lectures: "These people are conscious of little troubles, and they are looking for little remedies: they are like sailors who would worry about a leak in the plumbing when their ship had a hole in its side and their compass was out of order and their steering gear failed to work."⁹ Strikingly appropriate to the professor as well as to the creative writer is the declaration of the late Eugene O'Neill that unless today's playwright is concerned with the roots of today's sickness in the loss of religious orientation, then he "has no more real status than a parlor entertainer."¹⁰

⁴Spencer, p. 168-69.

⁵Spencer, p. 175.

⁶Spencer, p. 178.

⁷Spencer, p. 177.

⁸Douglas Bush, "Paradise Lost" in *Our Time*, New York, 1948, p. 57.

⁹Louis Mumford, "The Making of Men," in *The Humanities Look Ahead: Report of the First Annual Conference held by the Stanford School of Humanities*, Stanford University, 1944, p. 22.

¹⁰See Halford E. Luccock, *Contemporary American Literature and Religion*, New York, 1934, p. 22.

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In our own time, to be sure, important individuals and influential groups within our literary faculties are strenuously and successfully avoiding the status of "parlor entertainers." A great part of their effort is flourishing, good and healthy, even though it may not be specifically Christian. It is surely not news to anyone, however, that we frequently find unfortunate examples of what Theodore Spencer called the overreliance upon the vatic side of literature. Thus, we are often told in connection with the Humanities that they represent modern man's hope for a new gospel. One well-known humanist in a great state university declares that we cannot find "a permeating and unifying ideal" in religious intent, "in the present situation," but declares that such an ideal can become accepted in terms of humanistic intent.¹¹ Similarly, the president of one of the nation's oldest and noblest universities, comes out strongly against sin, stagnation and moral sickness, and does so without any marked attention to the place in education of Christian thought as such, but with a steadfast reliance upon the power of the Humanities. "Atomized bits of knowledge," he declares, "are but a disconnected series of events until they are linked together in some universal meaning. For this link we must look to the Humanities."¹²

Now this last is a particularly interesting statement, for it assumes that the Humanities will automatically link together in some universal meaning what we presently have in the way of atomized bits of knowledge. But how can the Humanities, as such, do this? In the final analysis, the Humanities may well provide, not the desired universal meaning, but may rather serve merely to increase the confusion by inundating us with additional atomized bits of knowledge. Indeed, this is all that they will provide if approached in terms of a pervasive, albeit well-bred, positivism. "Natural knowledge is but numberless observation," as we read in *Piers Plowman*,¹³ and unless the study of literature, or any other of the humanistic subjects, be linked with something more than "numberless observation" it can only serve to multiply and expand the present atomization. The common fear of making a commitment, the concomitant determination to avoid all bias, the insistence upon bedding down in the cool drafts of a perpetually open mind, can destroy the search for meaning from the very start, for such convictions themselves amount to the most naive and dangerous of preconceptions, shutting off from the outset the possibility of rapprochement with the broader and more vital areas of truth. So it was that Unamuno accused the intellectuals of his native Spain of using ideas as the roué uses women, employing them as paramours for a night, as playthings, as toys, and no more.¹⁴ For such academicians, committed to their dissociation from commitment, the Humanities can lead nowhere.

¹¹Norman Foerster, *The Humanities and the Common Man*, Chapel Hill, 1946, p. 5.

¹²Harold W. Dodds, "To Teach Wisdom," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (May 9, 1952), p. 9.

¹³William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (trans. Henry W. Wells), London, 1938, p. 155.

¹⁴See John A. Mackay, *Heritage and Destiny*, New York, 1943, p. 66.

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All this is perhaps to put the problem in its most baleful light, which to be sure is no bad thing, if we also examine it from other points of view. And the state of secular learning, from whatever point it may be viewed, is not entirely wholesome. Departments of literature become alternately encouraged and discouraged according as the immediate trends develop, but over the long range their position seems comparatively less secure than it has been in the past and there are those, of whom Howard Mumford Jones of Harvard is one, who seriously fear that we may be divorcing ourselves from a really vital, wholesome and constructive discharge of "the duties tradition lays upon us."¹⁵ One of the most startling indictments of our situation comes in a description which Lewis Mumford gives of Plato's Athens, with an implied comparison to modern America:

Not the least significant thing about Plato's utopias, however, was that he did not go to any pains to restore the arts and humanities to the place they had occupied in fifth-century Athens: he sought rather to subordinate them, to regulate them, even to banish some of them from his ideal commonwealth. Was this a perverse judgment on Plato's part? To generations of later humanists it has often seemed so. But what forced Plato to this hard choice? The answer should be plain: Athens needed men, and the humanities by themselves did not produce them. Indeed, for lack of political discipline and moral responsibility, the teachers of the humanities hindered rather than aided the making of whole men: they were producing facile rhetoricians, glib orators, clever teachers, connoisseurs, not men capable of living robustly on every plane of existence. Citizens who would serve in the law courts or on the battlefield as readily as they would write a poem or pursue an abstract truth, men of the stature of Sophocles and Socrates, were no longer being created. Plato, the artist, was ready to reduce the scope and influence of the arts in order to save the civilization that had created them. Was he wrong?¹⁶

The final appraisal which I wish to cite is that in which Aldous Huxley judges the success of the conventional secular academician, and erects a tombstone in his memory. Those "hilarious symptoms of success" who are educators, he writes, "deserve due honor and commemoration. Let us build a Pantheon for professors. It should be located among the ruins of one of the gutted cities of Europe or Japan, and over the entrance to the ossuary I would inscribe, in letters six or seven feet high, the simple words: Sacred to the memory of the World's Educators. SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS CIRCUMSPICE."¹⁷

III

What does the Christian humanist have to say to these disturbing conditions of higher education in general and of literary studies in particular? Let it be admitted at once that the Christian will have nothing to contribute if he speaks only out of his own shallow sentimentalism projected upon a cosmic screen. Nor will he have anything to say if he speaks only on the basis of a fragmented and fore-shortened oversimplification of the Christian world view, and he will be nothing but a rabid propagandist if he attempts to cut all educational cloth to fit his own

¹⁵Howard Mumford Jones, "The Humanities and the Common Reader," *The Humanities: An Appraisal* (ed. Julian Harris), University of Wisconsin Press, 1950, p. 34.

¹⁶Mumford, p. 134.

¹⁷Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, New York, 1950, xxi.

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measure. Again, his contribution can surely not be effective if he approaches the problems, failures, and weaknesses of the present situation armed only, or even primarily, with merely negative and proscriptive suggestions. Most certainly, and above all, the Christian humanist must avoid the narrow and the fanatical, and this not so much because he is a humanist as because he is a Christian.

The Christian contribution to learning, literary and otherwise, cannot stoop to tactics which our own great Christian humanist Woodrow Wilson described as "the small and churlish sort which seeks to reform by nagging," and Wilson would not have us to allow "the poor personal habits of other people to absorb and quite use up our fine indignation."¹⁸ On the contrary, as a Christian intellectual, Woodrow Wilson saw that at its heart higher education must be concerned with "the general ideals of conduct, of right living, and right thinking, which [make men] aware of a world moralized by principle, steadied and cleared of many an evil thing by true and catholic reflection and just feeling, a world, not of interests, but of ideas."¹⁹ Wilson further defined this great positive ideal of education in terms of giving students "insight into the things of the mind and of the spirit, a sense of having lived and formed their friendships amidst the gardens of the mind where grows the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a consciousness of having taken on them the vows of true enlightenment and of having undergone the discipline, never to be shaken off, of those who seek wisdom in candor, with faithful labour and travail of spirit."²⁰

Such a humane ideal as Wilson's can only be maintained upon a landscape of reality which is comprehensive, harmonious, intellectually and emotionally whole. If our educational standards are doubtful, it is perhaps because we have abandoned the fullness and richness of the Christian faith, or because we have narrowed and sentimentalized that faith without abandoning it. And, as Robert Louis Stevenson said, "it is not strange if we were tempted to despair of good—our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalized, and only please and weaken."²¹

The Christian who stands consciously and humbly against the full background of the Judeo-Christian tradition surely need feel no embarrassment in his point of view. He will find delight in the beauties of pagan literature, as well as in the aesthetic appeal of heretical literature, for although he will forever repudiate that softheadedness which buries all distinctions in a sentimental morass, he will forever rejoice in beauty wherever God has ordained that it may be created. The teachings of the Church on natural revelation will remind him that all truth is orthodox, and that all beauty is from God. As Charles Grosvenor Osgood of

¹⁸Wilson, *On Being Human*, New York, 1906, p. 41.

¹⁹Wilson, "The Spirit of Learning," in *Selected Literary and Political Papers*, New York, 1926, Vol. I, 245.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 257.

²¹See Kenneth B. Murdock, *Literature & Theology in Colonial New England*, Harvard University Press, 1949, p. 205.

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Princeton has said in his excellent book entitled *Poetry as a Means of Grace*, the Christian student of literature "who intelligently rejoices in his faith will rejoice intelligently in all that God has created, and gain at length an accurate and self-reliant discernment in matters both profane and sacred."²² Osgood is, of course, careful to discern, as every Christian surely must discern, that "secular literature cannot equal Holy Writ in power or authority or efficacy as a means of grace. Yet it may illustrate, reinforce, verify, and illuminate Holy Writ, and warp the world into the range and field of its magnetic influence. It may serve us at the sycamore tree served Zacchaeus, to gain a clearer sight of the Incarnate Truth."²³ It was in much the same way that Virgil had served Dante, in guiding him through the earlier stages of his ascent to God. And so it is that classical literature has served thousands of Christians, "as the sycamore tree served Zacchaeus, to gain a clearer sight of the Incarnate Truth." In our own day, post-Christian as many powerful elements of our culture are, we constantly find ourselves studying and teaching literary works which often are, at best, but half Christian, and which at times even appear anti-Christian, and yet we do not discard the insights and the beauties of such works for doctrinal reasons.

Indeed, to do so would be heresy, for it would constitute a denial of the doctrine of general revelation. Thus, twenty years ago, Professor Halford E. Luccock of the Yale Divinity School brought out his work on *Contemporary American Literature and Religion*, which was an honest facing of the doubts and tensions and disbeliefs of modern writers, and neither a condemnation nor a whitewash of their heresies. Then, too, within the past two years, Professor Amos Wilder of the Harvard Divinity School has presented us with his masterful *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition*, in which he eagerly accepts even the rejection with which many modern writers have rejected the Church for what they may reveal of the difficulties of modern man and the failures of the Church.²⁴ Such an attitude is thoroughly Christian. It is enough, I submit, for us to consider the modern semi-paganism in terms of general revelation, although I also strongly believe that we should act upon Theodore Spencer's wise suggestion that "a teacher who approaches contemporary civilization and its literature with an awareness of the religious values expounded by orthodoxy at its best will try to make his students see what is missing in the civilization that surrounds them and the literature that expresses it. He can awaken, by comparison of the present with a past, a dormant sense of values, and if he cannot indoctrinate, he can challenge."²⁵ So, without confusing truth and error, the Christian, of all men, is in the most advantageous position to accept all beauty and all truth as his own.

²²Charles G. Osgood, *Poetry as a Means of Grace*, Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 7.

²³Osgood, p. 8.

²⁴Amos Wilder, *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition*, New York, 1952. For Luccock, see fn. 10. For other provocative discussions, see the brilliant symposium edited by Stanley R. Hopper, *Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature*, New York, 1952.

²⁵Spencer, p. 172.

Nor is the Christian required to demand that all beauty serve an explicitly moral or didactic purpose, though he may and probably will think with the standard critics and poets of the past 2500 years that the greatest literature is found only where great beauty and significant truth are conjoined. By virtue of his Christian position, however, he does not hold that all beauty must be utilitarian. John Calvin, who was a leading humanist scholar before he became a leading formulator of primary Protestantism's thought, declared in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* that God "intended to provide not only for our necessity, but likewise for our pleasure and delight." Calvin made this doctrine even more explicit when he attacked what he called "that inhuman philosophy which, allowing no use of the creatures but what is absolutely necessary, not only malignantly deprives us of the lawful enjoyment of the Divine beneficence, but which cannot be embraced till it has despoiled man of all his senses, and reduced him to a senseless block."²⁶ To Calvin, "sculpture and painting are gifts of God," while "the manifold agility of the soul . . . [and] the invention of such admirable arts are certain proofs of the divinity in man."²⁷ These statements are particularly significant, coming as they do from a great Protestant thinker who has often, though erroneously, been accused of anti-aestheticism. Indeed, the leading authority on Calvin's aesthetic views and on the relationship of Calvinism and art, Professor Léon Wencelius, of Swarthmore has written: "Calvin reveals to us a new manner of communion between the artist and God. It is not in attempting to represent Him, in attempting to represent Christ, that the artist achieves his closest rapprochement with divinity, but in continuing by his own personal effort as a creator the creative activity of God. . . . Calvin forbade the representation of God by art and assigned to it as object not the Creator, but the creation, which it should, after a fashion, continue."²⁸

Such a view does not, of course, free the artist from the common lot of man, and it surely does not make him autonomous, a law unto himself. The autonomous declaration "art for art's sake" must, within this context, appear to be as amoral as is the credo "business is business." Thus, although art is not and cannot be regarded as the be all and the end all, the view outlined by Wencelius clearly exalts the artist and his art to a level far beyond the level accessible to a mere technician and his technique. And within this view, be it recalled, consciously didactic and utilitarian concerns are not prerequisite to art, which God intends "not only for our necessity, but likewise for our pleasure and delight." When so regarded, aesthetic beauty is lifted above the charge of triviality or irrelevance, and its appreciation is anchored in the very structure of the universe. Sacredness, then, is viewed as coming not from the subjects treated, but rather from the manner of the treatment. Against this background, it is by no means surprising that Rembrandt, as a child

²⁶ Calvin, *Institutes* (trans. John Allen), 3.10. 2-3.

²⁷ Calvin, 1.11.12 and 1.5.5.

²⁸ Léon Wencelius, *D'Esthétique de Calvin*, Pariss Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1937, p. 412, Translation mine.

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of the Reformed Church of Holland,²⁹ should have been described by Goethe as "a true saint, who saw God present everywhere, at every step, in the chamber, and in the fields, and did not need the surrounding pomp of temples and sacrifices to be drawn towards Him."³⁰ Such was the general pattern of art, especially literary art, within the early Reformed tradition.

In Rembrandt we clearly have an artist whose Christianity was, at the very least, implicit in all that he painted. There have been many writers of the same type, and in these men we must certainly give religious emphasis a properly central place in our teaching. Within this category the most conspicuous names, I suspect, are Langland, Dante, Spenser, Shakespeare, Racine, Milton, Bunyan, Browning, and, in America, Nathaniel Hawthorne, whom Amos Wilder describes as "the last important [American writer] to do his work as one freely at home in the Hebraic-Christian tradition."³¹ There can scarcely be any doubt that these writers and many lesser figures like them, by their explicit and consistent reliance upon the patterns of Christian thought as a whole, make nearly ideal conveyors of the Christian tradition to a nearly paganized culture. Not only is this true, but I submit that secularized modern man must be given a rather full acquaintance with the Christian world view if he is to understand and appreciate these writers even on the most elementary planes of their art. At this point, it becomes incumbent upon us as honest literary scholars and teachers to acquire a mature and intelligent understanding of Christian thought and history, an understanding well beyond that which has been bequeathed to us through our Sunday School activities, past or present, for without in some sense becoming what Sir Walter Moberly calls "lay theologians," we will be seriously handicapped in treating the great and master spirits of our literary tradition. This is true because most of our great literature is also Christian literature, with Christian literature being defined in the words of Henry Van Dyke as including "those writings in which men have interpreted life and nature from a Christian standpoint, in language of distinction and charm, touched with the personality of the author, and rounded into forms of clear and lasting beauty. The standpoint does not need to be always defined or described. A man who looks from a mountain-peak tells you not of the mountain on which he stands, but of what he sees from it. It is not necessary to name God in order to

²⁹This reference to Rembrandt is made in terms of Léon Wencelius' position, which also has marked applicability in some contexts for literary artists: "À l'époque de Rembrandt, qu'on le veuille ou non, se posaient dans toute leur acuité les grands problèmes de la théologie calviniste, et cette vie spirituelle intense marquait de son empreinte toute la conception que les Hollandais avaient de l'univers. Les Pays-Bas vivaient sous le signe de la pensée de Calvin, qui était le climat spirituel dominant, et, pour le sentir, Rembrandt n'avait pas besoin d'aller au temple ou de suivre des leçons de théologie, il pouvait être le plus parfait hérétique, mais il ne pouvait pas s'empêcher, lui le visionnaire, de voir la réalité spirituelle qui moulait l'âme de ses modèles, qui sculptait leur destinée: il les voyait ainsi, traduisait sa vision dans son oeuvre, sans que son intelligence ait jamais même eu besoin de connaître les principales propositions de l'*Institution Chrétienne*." (*Calvin et Rembrandt*, Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1937, p. 233.)

³⁰See Joseph Crouch, *Puritanism and Art*, London, 1910, p. 327.

³¹Wilder, p. 30.

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revere and obey him."⁸²

That such Christian literature constitutes the overwhelming bulk of our great writing, there can be little if any doubt. To teach it properly, we must know the tradition thoroughly, especially as it relates to our particular subjects and periods, and we must be prepared to present it whenever necessary to facilitate the understanding of the work of art itself. In those areas which are most strongly marked by revolt against Christianity, or by the tensions of religious doubt and insecurity, we may still render great service, as has been suggested, by our acquaintance with the total Christianity which has so often been rejected because it was confused with fragments and caricatures. As for the sheer beauty of lyric poetry, unadorned with utility or with didacticism, we can relish it to the full, as we have seen, not as a harmless and useless trifle, but as a great and pure gift of the living God. In all these areas, and others, the Christian humanist in literary studies is most free and most whole, being enfranchised to the company of the great in all ages, and being devoted to the most applicable and comprehensive of all truths, in his own age. Within the perplexities, problems and frustrations of modern academic life, therefore, I submit that the Christian scholar and critic who bases himself with humility and acumen in the great traditions of the Church, will be the man who speaks most directly, most answerably and most liberally to the modern world. It can hardly be otherwise, for as Charles G. Osgood has written, "a critic is not, as some fancy, a mere professional shopping-agent among literary fashions, paid to relieve us of the trouble of making up our minds. . . . A critic is one who is in search of permanent values, and who develops a power to recognize them, and the ultimate reasons for believing in them. To train self-reliant readers of this sort is the primary aim of all teaching of literature."⁸³

⁸²See Crouch, p. 361.

⁸³Osgood, p. 4.

The Modern Conception of the Universe and Christian Faith

E. J. McSHANE



IF I WERE CONFRONTED WITH a group of college freshmen and asked to address them on science and religion, I would have to assume that some of them were in the stage of confusion following their first discovery that some of the asserted facts of science are in contradiction with the statements in the Bible, regarded literally as assertions of fact. The mental turmoil that outwardly reached one of its climaxes in the late nineteenth century is repeated inwardly whenever a young man tries to adjust an unquestioning childlike acceptance of the Bible so as to avoid head-on collision with the teachings of science, themselves often accepted in a childlike and unquestioning manner. However, I shall proceed on the assumption that at least nearly all readers of *The Christian Scholar* have reached a stage in which the foundations of their faith cannot be shaken by the outcome of any laboratory experiment. The books of the Bible were written by men who had their own pictures of the universe, and they are read by us who have discarded these older pictures and replaced them with others, not guaranteed eternal. But, as Barth says, the Bible is free with respect to all world pictures. And similar ideas have been expressed in other words by many other great theologians. This does not constitute an invitation to theologians to discard all interest in those highly interesting pictures which we call scientific theories; it is a warning that no such picture may be made part of the foundation of faith.

If we accept this it might seem that an article on the subject of the modern conception of the universe and Christian faith should first present some entertaining jottings about recently discovered scientific facts, and then dispose of the significance of these facts for Christian faith by remarking that they have no such significance. But the discovery and organization of facts in the physical and mathematical sciences takes place within a climate of thought. And within the last hundred years this climate of thought has altered in a way which is not without meaning for Christian scholars. Speaking broadly, scientists and mathematicians have been forced to criticize their own patterns of reasoning, and have found that in several cases their assertions were reached by the dangerous road of "argument by analogy." I shall substantiate this by examples of assorted types; and in each I hope to make it clear that scientists had made assertions beyond the region in which they could justly feel confident, and were forced to mark the boundaries of their proper domains.

II

The gathering of facts, though essential, is far from being the entire task of a science. The facts must be coordinated into an intelligible system. This is done

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by constructing a model whose behavior parallels the fundamental aspects of the behavior of the natural system under investigation. Often this model is a mathematical model, in which some mathematical entities are used to represent the objects in the system and mathematical operations are used to represent the actions in the system. Thus the whole numbers 1, 2, 3, . . . can be used to represent finite collections by the method known as "counting"; the physical action of lumping together two collections is represented by the mathematical operation known as "addition". All of us have been conscious of the usefulness of this model since about the first grade.

An ancient example of a model is the system of epicycles of Claudius Ptolemy. Each planet owned a basic cycle, pictured as a revolving crystal sphere. On this sphere was the center of another sphere, the epicycle, on whose surface the planet was fixed. As observations grew in accuracy it became necessary to pile crystal sphere on crystal sphere, but the principle remained unaltered. The model was capable of providing extremely accurate predictions of planetary positions. But there was a lack of unifying principle. Epicycle was piled on epicycle to explain observations. The model became unsatisfactory, and eventually was replaced by the more beautiful and essentially simpler model of a universe obeying Newton's laws of motion, under forces obeying Newton's law of gravitation. This was a great improvement, but our predecessors did not realize wherein the improvement lay. They felt that they had replaced a false concept by a true one, rather than that they had invented a satisfactory model to replace an inadequate one.

Scientists, in discussing this model, felt that they were discussing the reality underlying it, and were unwilling to consider the possibility that the model might be less than perfect. And their confidence was reflected in the views of others. Even in the hymn "Praise the Lord: ye heavens adore Him," written in 1796, we find the lines "Praise the Lord, for He hath spoken; Worlds His mighty voice obeyed; Laws which never shall be broken For their guidance He hath made." The confidence in the inviolability of the laws and the perfection of the model was exhibited in Laplace's assertion: "Give me the position and velocity of every particle of the universe, and I will predict its entire future course." A friend of mine told me of the amusing side remarks in two papers on celestial mechanics which he had read. Laplace showed that the equations of motion had a solution in which sun, earth and moon remain always in a straight line. Then he tossed off the comment that God had overlooked an opportunity; if he had put the moon at that place, we would always have had a full moon. A German mathematician, however, showed that Laplace's solution was not stable. So he defended God by solemnly pointing out that even if God had put the moon there, the slightest disturbance would have started it drifting away, never to return. It seems that to him, Newton's description of the universe was something really sacred.

III

Today this attachment to a model is gone, or at least the remaining vestiges of it are recognized as a source of error. When a model fails to conform with experiment it is discarded. An outstanding example is the Bohr model of the atom, which was the stock in trade of physicists up to about 1925, but had to be abandoned. The reason for its abandonment lay as deep as the meaning of words. To illustrate the meaning of such a word as "velocity" we quote from a letter of Tomlinson Fort: "What do we mean by velocity of light? As commonly understood, we mean a number which we get when we do so and so. . . . To talk of velocity of light apart from man's operations is simply making a noise."¹

In the Bohr model of the atom, each electron was thought of as a tiny particle moving in an orbit, so that it had at each instant an exact position and an exact momentum. But experimental evidence forced physicists to the conclusion that it is inherently impossible to perform any experiment that will give both the exact position and the exact momentum of an electron. So the Bohr model provided conclusions which, in Fort's words, were merely noises. In treating the electrons of an atom like the planets in a solar system we were arguing by analogy, and the analogy was not valid. And in the process we had used the phrase "an electron with position exactly *a* and momentum exactly *b*", which seems to be noun-phrase, but is in fact not a noun, in the sense that it is not the name of anything. Thus Laplace's remark about the future of the universe degenerates into nonsense.

The furious late-Victorian conflict between theologians and scientists has subsided largely because theologians realized that they had trespassed on the domain of science. Along with the revelation of God in the Bible, they had held firmly to the world-picture of the men who had put that revelation into human words, and they had used this ancient world-picture as a basis for pronouncements on the behavior of material objects. Now the physical scientists have also retreated from ground on which they were trespassing. I am not trying, as some one said, to find room for God in the indeterminacy of the atom. I say merely that physicists have withdrawn from a ground in which contention might well occur, and which they now realize is out of their proper domain.

Perhaps there is a lesson here for all of us, whether as scientists or Christians or just everyday citizens. In thinking down to the foundations of our beliefs, we will do well to watch for words which seem to be nouns, but in reality are not the names of anything.

IV

Mathematicians are often congratulated because in their science there is no uncertainty and no contention. We now turn to a situation in mathematics which at one time caused great perplexity and some acrimony, and which is even yet not

¹*Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 77, p. 332.

settled to the satisfaction of all mathematicians. In the late nineteenth century Georg Cantor began the serious study of sets. Somewhat vaguely, a set is what results when we have several things and consider them all at once, as a single entity. Finite sets are easily grasped; a set of chessmen or the set of United States Senators of today can be thought of without trouble. With this as a start, one can easily delude himself into thinking that he has a grasp of sets in general, including the infinite sets. But this bland handling of the infinite by analogy with the finite led to paradoxes. For example, if we assume this extensive mental grasp of sets, we can classify all sets into two classes. One consists of all those sets which are members of themselves. The other, more interesting to us, is the set (we call it N) of all sets which do *not* belong to themselves. For instance, a set of chessmen is not a chessman; the set of all Senators is not a Senator. Each set S is "elected to" the set N if S is not a member of itself; S is not "elected to" N if S is a member of itself. So whenever S is a set, the two sentences, (a) S is a member of N , (b) S is not a member of S , are either *both* true or else are *both* false. But since in these sentences S can be any set, in particular we may choose S to be N itself. Now our two sentences (a) and (b), which *must* be either both true or both false, take the form, (c) N is a member of N , and (d) N is not a member of N . But manifestly these cannot be both true, nor can they be both false. Hence, we have reached a contradiction; sentences (c) and (d) are, and are not, both true or both false.

The difficulty lies, of course, in another form of "argument by analogy." We gave to vast collections of objects the same name that we gave to finite collections whose behavior is easily grasped, and we proceeded to act as though their behavior would be like that of the little sets.

Practically all mathematicians today agreed on the way to resolve the difficulty, although they may disagree on the relative elegance of different devices for providing the details. We begin with a small stock of sets of unquestionably mild behavior, and we adopt a few simple rules of operation by means of which sets can be generated from other sets; for example, if two sets are put together, the union is again a set. Nothing is called a set unless it can be arrived at by these rules. Thus the domain of discourse of a set-theoretician is delimited. It turns out that the paradoxical N just described is "beyond the pale"; the expression "the set of all sets which are not members of themselves" is not really a noun-phrase, because it does not name anything. The contradictions within mathematics were the result of taking in too much territory, and were eliminated by marking off the proper bounds of the science and staying within them.

V

Our next example goes even deeper into the basis of all science, for it sets limitations on the certainty of reasoning itself.

It is obvious that the study of algebra or calculus would be vastly more difficult if we attempted to get along without symbols, expressing everything by

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words. The study of logic is likewise made far clearer when symbolism is introduced. There are several systems of formal logic in use today, but they agree in having a rather small collection of symbols (for example, the mark, " \rightarrow " for "implies"; thus " $A \rightarrow B$ " is read "A implies B", or "if A then B"), and in having formal rules of procedure by which these symbols can be combined into allowable sentences. There are also rules of inference, by means of which a few primitive "true" sentences generate other "true" sentences.

One obviously desirable property of a logical system is consistency; it should not be possible to prove both a statement A and its denial. Consequently, many attempts were made in the early twentieth century to develop a useful system of logic which could be proved consistent. But these attempts stopped in 1931. For that was the year in which Kurt Gödel published his proof of a theorem easy enough to state, although its proof called for great ingenuity. This theorem may be stated as follows: Given a logical system inclusive enough to allow us to do ordinary arithmetic, if the system is consistent its consistency cannot be proved within the system. As a result, the best that we can hope for in a given system is that it will stand up under all the tests that logicians devise to try it—and I should say that logicians are most ingenious in devising tortures for a proposed logical system. But there can never be absolute certainty that such a system will bear up under some still more drastic test which no one has happened to dream up as yet.

This puts a bound on the very concept of "mathematical certainty." This has often been used as a synonym for "absolute certainty." It is not. At best it means "as certain as the system of logic itself." But this is not the time for non-mathematicians to look down on mathematicians. We are all in the same trouble. Mathematical logic is not something reserved for mathematicians. It is an attempt to make precise the somewhat vague processes used by any of us in "logical thinking." If the precise formulation is not certainly free from contradiction, it is hardly reasonable to suppose that a retreat into vagueness will help matters.

Gödel's theorem, of course, does not take away what we might call "working confidence." I do not have absolute certainty that the sun will rise tomorrow, but I do have a working confidence that it will rise, and I plan my day accordingly. Mathematicians continue to publish research, and all of us continue to apply logical thinking to our problems (at least to some extent!), because of our working confidence in logic. But there have been some men who have tried to use logic in a more ambitious undertaking. Some of them have attempted to obtain an irrefutable proof of the existence of God; others have thought they had an absolute certainty of His non-existence. Even without Gödel's theorem these efforts were subject to suspicion, in that they purported to prove the existence (or non-existence) of the absolute by use of a tool made by men. But Gödel's theorem replaces these suspicions by a precise formulation using no ideas foreign to the strictest pure logic. By logical thinking it is proved that logical thinking cannot establish the consistency of logical thinking. No absolute certainty concerning anything

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can be reached by logic, because we cannot ever be certain that the logic is itself free of contradiction.

For us the formula must be Anselm's, "faith seeking understanding." The prophet trying to speak God's word to the crowd is in somewhat the position of a bright school-child who has heard a lecture by Einstein and is trying to explain it to the kindergarten. But he who tries to reach absolute certainty about God by way of logic is in a far worse position than that same bright school-child would be if, never having heard of Einstein, he set out to invent relativity theory for himself.

VI

In order to lead up to my final point I shall sketch the recent advances in the dating of the universe. I might as well admit at once that the illustration is not really essential to my point, but I am so interested in it that I need only a slender excuse for presenting it.

During the nineteenth century many devices were proposed for estimating the ages of rocks, but these depended on conditions that varied from age to age. But the discovery of radioactivity provided a new kind of clock. In the first years of the twentieth century Rutherford showed that the rate of decay of radioactive elements remained unaffected by any extremes of temperature and pressure which he could apply, and all subsequent evidence corroborates this; we may feel confident that throughout all past time each radioactive element continued to decay at the same rate, irrespective of its surroundings. Rutherford himself was the first to describe a method by which this phenomenon can be used to date rocks; O. Holmes made notable advances, and the subject is under active study today. The four elements most useful for this purpose are thorium, the two isotopes of uranium, and (for the oldest rocks) strontium. To be specific, suppose that in an old rock we find some traces of thorium, with atomic weight 232. This decays at a known rate, the end-product being the isotope of lead with atomic weight 208, usually written Pb^{208} . Ordinary lead is a mixture of several isotopes, including Pb^{204} which is not the end-product of any radioactive decay. So the amount of Pb^{204} reveals the amount of ordinary lead present. Subtracting this leaves us with the amount of lead resulting from radioactivity. Now we know how much Pb^{208} is present as a result of decay of thorium, how much thorium is still left, and how fast thorium decays to Pb^{208} . An easy calculation provides the age of the rock. By such means the dates of the great geological eras have been fixed with most satisfactory accuracy. As of the present, the oldest rocks found were laid down about 2,800,000,000 years ago.

But Holmes went on to an even deeper conclusion (*Endeavour*, vol. VI, pp. 99-108). The lead found in ores of different geological ages has a composition which varies with the age; more recent samples have higher percentages of those isotopes which are the end-products of radioactive decay. Holmes assumed that each sample fairly represented the earth's supply of lead at its own date of solidification,

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and found equations determining the time of the beginning of radioactive decay on the earth. By applying these to many samples he deduced that radioactive decay on earth began about 3,350,000,000 years ago. Quite recently other geologists, working with the decay of strontium to rubidium, have decided that this should be revised upward to about four billion years; but this is to be regarded as a good confirmation, rather than as a disproof.

In addition to these methods there are others, not quite so trustworthy, for estimating the age of the earth. We have not the time to mention all of them, but must be content to refer to an article by D. ter Haar where these methods are described and shown to be in remarkably good agreement.²

Going back still further, we have an estimate for the age of the entire universe based on the red shift. Measurements of the spectra of stars in distant nebulae show that the light from these stars is shifted toward the red end of the spectrum, as would be the case if these nebulae were rapidly receding from us. If we accept this, as some but not all astronomers do, we find that the universe is expanding steadily, without great change in shape. If we trace its course backward in time, the indication is that it was comparatively tiny dimensions some four or five billion years ago, and has been expanding ever since. This led some physicists, notably G. Gamow, into a daring and perhaps poetic concept of the origin of the universe³. Once, about four or five billion years ago, all the matter and energy (indistinguishable!) in the universe were tightly packed together. Then they began explosive expansion. The matter consisted at first of neutrons only, but these began at once to decay to form hydrogen nuclei. In five minutes helium appeared, and after about half an hour all the elements were formed. After a few hundred million years the material had cooled down enough to let condensation start, giving a beginning for stars and galaxies.

Even if we consider that the flavor of this is improved by a little salt, we can still have an interest in two questions, one easy and one deep. First, what is the meaning of "five minutes after the expansion began?" Second, what would be the meaning of "five minutes before the expansion began?" The first has an easy answer. From the first instant there were neutrons. Catch yourself a million neutrons and watch them until 52,380 of them have decayed; that is one minute. But the other question has no such easy answer. In order to measure five minutes before the explosion we would have to have a clock. None seems possible. If this is the case, then the expression "five minutes before the explosion" is another set of words which looks like a noun-phrase, but does not name anything; that is, it is a noise. I was rather surprised when I learned that this up-to-date physical conclusion has been asserted earlier, in somewhat different words, by St. Augus-

²*Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 77, p. 173.

³*American Scientist*, vol. 39, (1951), pp. 393-406.

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time. When asked what God was doing in the time before the creation, he answered that time is a thing created, so there was no time before the creation.

This tempts me to stray onto dangerous territory. If we try to express the idea that the Creator is not bound by his creatures' space and time, we can to some extent free our minds of space-binding and say that God is omnipresent. But the efforts of some theologians to express a similar freedom from time have been far less satisfactory; for the human mind of today is too rigidly time-bound even for the purposes of physics. Thus for example the special theory of relativity, an everyday tool of modern physicists, informs us that the concept of simultaneity of events at different places is relative, not absolute. This is one of the points of relativity theory most difficult to reconcile with our prejudices; we are too imbued with Newton's concept of an independent "evenly following" time. Far less, then, can we enter a state of mind in which "before" and "after" are as denuded of meaning as "up" and "down" are in interstellar space. So we cannot conceive what the word "predestination" could possibly mean if we were not time-bound. But on the other hand it is far from easy to decide exactly what that word means in the presence of an unmanageable time. All the experimental devices by which scientists specify the precise meaning of a word are here denied us. It does not seem possible to devise any definition of predestination which satisfies the stringent demands of modern science. And if we decide that modern science is too rigorous in its requirements for precise meaning and decide instead to use "common sense", we must recognize that we have deliberately introduced vagueness. As some one has remarked, common sense is that perception which assures us that the world is flat.

While I can not admit a real conflict between science and religion, I can readily admit that as long as human beings are fallible and irascible there may be conflict between theologians and scientists. When this occurs, I think that usually one of the following errors has occurred. The theologian may have wandered from the domain of faith into the domain of assertions about some particular world-picture. Or the scientist may have trespassed beyond the domain of science, by using meaningless noises in place of words, by forgetting that he is speaking of a scientific model and confusing the model with some underlying reality, or by giving absolute confidence to a logical reasoning that actually deserves only a "working confidence." And I am confident that when the error is located and the trespasser withdraws to his domain, the conflict will disappear.

Biological Development and the Christian Doctrine of Man

PHILIP N. JORANSON



THE PARTICULAR APPROACH suggested here for coming at those areas of concern which are in focus when Christian doctrine about the nature of man is studied in relation to the data of biological development and their theoretical treatment, is believed to be an outcome of holding in relation to each other, six principal assumptions. These are as follows:

1. The Hebrew-Christian tradition concerns and contains a revelation of what is ultimate, which possesses a uniqueness, a primal character, a genius not discernible in revelation from any other source.
2. What this uniqueness, this primal character, this genius may be, and what it implies about the nature of man, are sought with great difficulty if the quest be pursued wholly within what has been received from orthodox Christian theology. It is difficult to work within the limits of its intellectual structures, without modification of the nature of what it has regarded as appropriate basic materials, in constraint of its formidable semantic conditioning and symbol fixation, and without understanding of other major religious traditions and other possible media of revelation.
3. The philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, performed two relevant services of great value when he (a) opened the gates for a flood of new, freshly oriented, methodologically auspicious inquiry by giving voice to his conviction that "there is an insistent presupposition continually sterilizing philosophic thought . . . the belief, the very natural belief, that mankind has consciously entertained all of the fundamental ideas which are applicable to its experience"¹, and (b) developed in considerable detail his own evolving organismic approach.
4. We are today enmeshed in a bewildering period in world development in which it has become practically, religiously and intellectually requisite to make novel appeal for guidance to a structured Christian world view which will be able to take account, organically and faithfully, both of what is deepest, most universal and most essential to Christian faith and of what emerges as cognate in the myriad events and relations which the scientists and the scholars in all fields study, in their search for ever more intimate intelligence of man and nature.
5. The beginnings of Christian cosmology along these lines are now in the making, with contributions from investigators whose areas of special

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¹A. N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*. (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 235.

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competence represent altogether virtually the whole range of knowledge, both theological and non-theological.

6. Biology—the science of living things—is one of the areas which may be expected to contribute to the newer Christian world view both component generalizations and constructive notions.

All of these assumptions, and some more than others, are so controversial that they should not be advanced without some effort at justification. This is largely omitted here, because of limitations of space, but several of the principal issues which would be raised are discussed in the context in which they are relevant.

Our subject concerns a limited area of science in relation to a limited area of Christian theology. What may emerge when other areas of science and of scholarship are related to this and to other areas of theology, will have implications for the structure and content of the present concern. Whatever of structure is recognized in inquiring after organic relations between biological development (conceived as life science from a dynamic viewpoint) and man in the light of Christian faith is thus dependent in status also upon whatever happens to be the nature of the much greater whole of which it is part.

But because biological events fully and fundamentally participate in the whole of reality, study of them is also capable of yielding insight into what it *is*, in which all things participate fully and fundamentally, *i. e.* of suggesting some of those notions of the greatest generality out of which a Christian world view might acquire its primary skeletal structure. In his *Science and the Modern World*, Whitehead has the following to say about similar distinctions.

"An organism is the realization of a definite shape of value. The emergence of some actual value depends upon limitation which excludes neutralizing cross-lights. Thus an event is a matter of fact which by reason of its limitation is a value for itself; but by reason of its very nature it also requires the whole universe in order to be itself."²

If such amazingly multiplied and integrated functioning be the stuff of the fabric within which all of us "curiositers" must pursue the quest for those threads which—if we could discover their relation to each other—would tell us what the pattern is, how dare we at any point be more than tentative, less than humble in our own participation; yet shall we be duped into believing that this constraint means suppressing that strangely moving excitement of participation which comes from knowing that we are, in our own personal selves, part of this fabric, yea more, of this pattern!

BIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

The many aspects from which biological development may be studied include the relatively special, restricted sciences of physiology, genetics, cytology, morphology, embryology, and taxonomy, as well as the relatively more compound sciences of evolution and ecology. An attempt which is made later in this paper to suggest a structure from notions drawn both from Christian faith and from biological development, is based mainly upon genetics, cytology, evolution, and ecology for its biological reference.

²A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Macmillan, 1925), p. 193.

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Several of those biologists who have been most attentive to the philosophical backgrounds of their work have dwelt upon the relative clarity and analyzability of that cluster of related events which is studied in the fields of genetics and cytology, that is, the behavior of the units of heredity—the genes—which are found on the chromosomes, in the nuclei of the cells. In this area, a good deal of mathematical analysis is possible. The fundamental entities and relations are relatively clearly identifiable and seem to have handles by which they may be got hold of. Both the late C. L. Huskins³ and Erwin Schrodinger⁴, author of the most provoking little book, *What Is Life?*, have attempted philosophical analyses in which the interpretation of cytogenetic data plays a large part, and some of the possibilities here have been recognized by others, as well.

But this is by no means the only aspect of life science which furnishes possible data for the experimental cosmologist. Indeed, genetics and cytology must be considered as dealing, not with the most elemental of biological process, but, as Schrader⁵ has recently emphasized, with very high level integrations built up out of many physiological processes, with their numerous mechanisms and their complex basis in molecular structure. In physiology one may descend to the foundation levels of biological nature and study those elemental entities and processes out of which the dynamic, hierarchical structure of life is built. Various possible physiological roots for a world view—Christian, or otherwise oriented—have been brought to light in the works of Cannon⁶, Agar⁷, Lillie⁸, Gerard⁹, and others.

Highly provocative and pertinent suggestions from biology anent the meaning of man and the universe have come from students of organic evolution and from those whose principal competence is primarily in a more restricted science which contributes to the study of evolution. These are much more widely known because they concern an aspect of the total problem in which there is much popular interest and in which form, historically, the question of the nature of man has commanded so much attention. While it is often said today that the theory of organic evolution and Christian conception of the nature of man are not necessarily in contradiction, it is a mistake, from the present point of view, to believe that, if it

³C. L. Huskins, "Science, Cytology and Society," in *Symposium on Cytology* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), p. 69.

⁴Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1945), p. 91.

⁵F. Schrader, *Mitosis, the Movements of Chromosomes in Cell Division*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), p. 170.

⁶W. B. Cannon, *The Wisdom of the Body* (New York: Norton, 1932), p. 312.

⁷W. E. Agar, *A Contribution to the Theory of the Living Organism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 225.

⁸R. S. Lillie, *General Biology and Philosophy of Organism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 209.

⁹R. W. Gerard, "Higher Levels of Integration," *Science* (XCV, 1942), pp. 309-313.

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is true, this ends the matter. Rather, what has been achieved so far is perhaps more in the nature of removing some of the barriers to a really fundamental study of the issues involved. We are already well into that era when we need organic understanding of our complexly influenced life.

While biological contributions to cosmology tended for a long time to consider that matter was fundamental, there is now a growing number of biological philosophers, organismic in their approach, who consider relations more fundamental than matter itself. These are by no means necessarily Christian in their outlook, although some are, but the position which is taken here is that their treatment of the data of biology and their research orientation are more likely than starkly mechanist approaches to describe biological development in terms which will make possible the study of its relevance to man as he is in the light of Christian revelation.

THE RELIGIOUS REFERENCE

The Christian doctrine of man which has dominated the theological tradition to which we are heir is the fall-guilt-redemption formula, with variations. It can scarcely be claimed, however, that this conception really exhausts the possibilities for discerning the nature of man which are expressed in the Christian tradition. Many of the sayings and deeds of Jesus, the Gospel of John, a great deal of the writing of Paul, and many of the Christian mystics dwell upon man's capacity for sharing the nature of God, but this emphasis has been pushed out by an alliance of legalism and symbolism and by a continuous interpretational insulation which has been interposed between the theologian and the actual experience data which are still there somewhere underneath.

The Christian conception of man which we have received is also needy of continuous reinterpretation in the light of psychological knowledge and of those other modern sources for the understanding of man which have a right to be regarded as commentaries, in some sense, upon biblical meaning. Neither does this doctrine take seriously those characteristic insistences of other world religions which somehow refuse to melt away in consequence of certain of the claims which are made for the superiority of Christian faith.

We have, moreover, inherited a theological tendency to undervalue man in terms of his relation to nature. That the whole creation should groan and travail for the revealing of the sons of men is one of the more puzzling thoughts of Paul, we say, but scarcely one of the crucial ones. Yet theologian Paul Tillich¹⁰ decided not long ago that it must be taken seriously, and theologian Joseph Sittler¹¹ has recently restated the awareness that "earth is our sister".

There are thus at least two aspects of the nature of man which need more explicit notice than they have ordinarily received in Christian theology. They may be stated as propositions:

¹⁰P. J. Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribners, 1952), p. 76 ff.

¹¹J. Sittler, Jr., "A Theology for Earth," *The Christian Scholar* (XXXVII, 3, September 1954), pp. 307-374.

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- (1) that the destiny of man is to become like God, *i.e.*, sons of God, and
- (2) That man has the capacity, and the responsibility for a concern with himself and the character and significance of his relations with nature, a theme which is strongly developed in a legal way in the Pentateuch, in a more poetic way by other Old Testament writers, given intimate expression by Jesus, and then frequently lost sight of in most of the rest of the New Testament and of later Christian thought.

Apart from much greater preoccupation with both of these aspects of the nature of man, a perplexing, obscuring fog will continue to cloud fundamental relations between what has been revealed religiously and what the biologist studies scientifically. What offers real hope of illumination on the religious side of this crucial issue between science and religion will come more readily out of a partnership including the devotion of the inquirer himself, fresh, newly oriented perspectives upon the scriptures, sifting of the testimony of the mystics, and study of the lives of the saints, than from attempts to patch up inherited theologies.

Finally, one concludes from this and the previous section that neither what biological science has usually been taught to imply about the nature of man nor the manner in which Christian doctrine has characterized him, are adequate today. It is even possible that more satisfactory intelligence about the nature of man can come only as the resultant of the simultaneous impact of newly oriented study of biology and newly oriented participation in and study of Christian faith—and this in common cause with similarly conceived thrusts in physics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, etc.

A TRIAL COSMOLOGICAL THEME

One of the presuppositions identified at the beginning of this discussion concerned the proposition that in the Hebrew experience, in Jesus Christ as well as we can know him through the Bible, and in the Christian development which followed in consequence of his historical appearance, there is deeply imbedded that which amounts, altogether, to a master clue to reality. During the past half dozen years, it seemed increasingly evident to the present writer that what this religious source seemed to imply about the meaning of man and the universe was really intrinsically related to and inclusive of certain fundamental notions suggested by major features of biological process. Eventually, this impression became sufficiently definite to encourage an attempt to state a trial cosmological theme which would unite what was believed to be essential in the religious reference, to what was taken as fundamental in the biological reference, in a way that would capitalize upon both kinds of insight without doing violence to either.

This has very commonly been regarded as an almost impossibly ambitious endeavor. Yet it is too necessary in an existential sense today, too deeply seated an evidence of what it means to be human, to be put off, and perhaps any who undertake it can afford soon to be exposed as having been naive at many points, if there be yet some small gain at others. It is in this spirit that the orientation of thought

which follows is presented. The effort is qualified also by the need to be brief, which leaves time only for a rapid sketching in of the primary structural features.

It is proposed that the meaning of all events in the universe may be understood in terms of their participation in a unity which is expressed in a single cosmological proposition: *that God is reproducing His own nature into all other being, by means which are expressive of and completely in keeping with that nature.* Biological events, inanimate events, religious events, astronomical events, social events, aesthetic events, political events—each cooperates in this one directed cosmic becoming, and each also, in its individuality, comprehends and expresses as much of the nature of God as that nature both requires and permits. Biological reproduction (usually sexual reproduction), covering the earth with thousands of billions of living things all the way from the earliest and simplest to the contemporary and complex, is a fully and intrinsically participating aspect—not merely a precondition—of the reproduction of the nature of God into other being.

Definable sub-themes emerge out of the marvelously organized dynamics, each of which is still always the same theme, regardless of whether it be encountered in what we call biological, or in what we call religious, context. These sub-themes—vicarious sacrifice, the achievement of new kinds of complexly constituted diversity, the integration of diversity—are the continuous fruitage of a specific, fundamental and universal working which is everywhere basic in the process. The mechanics of this working comprises, on the one hand, a generative interplay of a family of four prime tendencies and, on the other, a determining effect upon the trend of this interplay which is registered by the relational, "environmental" impact of whatever has been realized already out of the past working of the process.

These four prime tendencies are (1) a tendency to produce, and therefore absolutely to require, *colossal numbers* of electrons, of carbon atoms, of protein molecules, of grains of sand, of the children of Abraham, of Australian bushmen, of grains of wheat; (2) continuous and prolific *production and distribution of novelty*; (3) a guarantee of sufficient *endurance* in the relationally constituted structures which emerge; and (4) the regular operation of *chance* at all levels, allied at the human level with moral freedom.

Every one of these prime tendencies functions through certain specific mechanisms without which it could not be expressed at all. Biological mechanism, in this view, is reinterpreted in a radical way. It is not itself primal, not itself a model of what the whole must be like, but dependent upon the whole for its interpretation. It is not detachedly subsidiary or servile; it is integral in the process, participates in it deeply and fully, shares in whatever value the process may be said to embody. Meiosis (division of the chromosomes to produce the sex cells) and mitosis (duplication of the chromosomes in vegetative growth) are both extremely complex mechanisms of the highest importance. The first, together with fertilization, comprehends and coordinates four different devices for the production of genetic novelty; the second promotes endurance of the gene combination with which an individual begins life.

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There is also a strong hint that appropriate mechanism should be expected, as well, in the ordering of the still higher levels of complexity which are in view when attention shifts to man's religious nature and history. However else he might also be conceived, there are, from the present point of view, many heavily weighted considerations which point to Jesus Christ as the principal mechanism through which the nature of God is reproduced into other beings by means completely consistent with the nature of God. We customarily think of his function in terms of the nature and destiny of man, but there it is also in terms of the nature and destiny of nature. The letter to the Hebrews, for example, refers to Christ as "he for whom and by whom the universe exists" (Hebr. 2:10, Moffatt). The purpose for which Christ functions as mechanism is the same cosmic purpose for which the mechanisms of biological reproduction function.

If this conception of Jesus Christ, man, and the cosmos contains truth, it may be expected also to contain the seeds of a new methodology appropriate for employment in all of the areas of implementation. This is of special significance in the areas of biblical interpretation and of Christian mysticism, but it would also have important "climatic" consequences for biological research. Space does not permit here even a preliminary attempt to develop consequences, nor does it provide opportunity to relate in detail why, in the first place, it is claimed that the biblical and mystical sources furnish support for this kind of world view. Perhaps the finest of these two limitations may be minimized, however, by attending briefly to one of three sub-themes mentioned earlier. This is the phenomenon of biological death as a concomitant feature of natural selection, and its relation to human death as vicarious sacrifice.

If all events flow in a stream of process which is a manifestation of value, then each event participates in that value. The operation of a universal natural selection throughout the cosmos thus inflicts death upon some and continuance in life upon others. But *both* kinds of destiny are continuously necessary to the process, and therefore *both* share in whatever value is achieved through their togetherness in the process. Death is important; tragedy is not sheer loss and emptiness; natural selection is not ruthless. The price of the continuance of the well-adjusted is sacrifice on the part of the ill-adjusted, and one does not necessarily always prefer the role of the former! The combination of immediate lethality and general benefit which may be seen in gene mutation when individual-to-whole relations are studied is cognate generically, with the situation which required the death of Jesus, and which was then itself transformed in consequence of the death.

CONSEQUENT LIGHT UPON THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN AND HIS RELATION TO NATURE

At least two possibilities inherent in the detailed development of the kind of world view which is set out here are so important that they deserve special notice. The first concerns the hope, suggested earlier, that through such unified study of

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reinterpreted Christian faith and reinterpreted biological science we may arrive at a much more adequate Christian doctrine of man than the formulations we have inherited. The second is the possibility that we may have found access to a Christian world view which offers some real hope of leading into an understanding of and cultivation of our relations with nature.

The man who emerges in the staggeringly complex and yet always ordered dynamics which flows out in consequence of what God is, is a creature which is able, as no other kind of life is able, to comprehend, to value, and to advance his relations to all of his fellows, to all of nature. This entire process is comprehended within the function of Jesus Christ. Part of this function is through the relation of forgiveness which, during the life span of a single individual has probably been known to work more significant transformation in kind than has been achieved during a thousand years of organic evolution in many non-human species. The valuation of the process is valuation as love—that strenuous kind of deeply welling, tugging, unabating, often seemingly futile, but always freshly appearing, somehow victorious love, revealed both in what we know of the historical Jesus and in all we truly know of ourselves and of the universe.

The manifestation in the human locus is within a unique, but still hardly more than primitively developed, openness for preceiving-receiving the very nature of God. This openness includes "ordinary" sense perception, true mystic capacity, in the sense of direct awareness of God, other less well recognized types of cognition, and a marvelous ordering of all data, all sense by the mind in partnership with the personality. God is at some distant—but intimately and warmly distant—long last, in all . . . through all . . . all!

God reproduces His nature in man as man progressively comprehends in himself all that God has done anywhere. God also reproduces His nature in the entire universe, since the universe is not intelligible apart from what man is and is capable of becoming. The mind of man is a mirror on the structure of the universe; the personality, the moral activity of man is continuous with the process of the universe—in electron, rock, star, protein molecule, tuberculosis germ, sex cell, blood corpuscle, grasshopper, lamb, dove, wheat plant, poison ivy, lily.

But man not only finds himself with the universe built into his own stuff; *he must now build his own developing stuff into the universe.* What is imperative now is surely not to be done for the sake of "conservation", or of "intelligent land management", or even of survival! Rather, it is time already to begin to *live within* our emerging Christian world views, to discover what deep new meanings so radically different a starting point will give to those basic human activities which today we disjointedly isolate into categories of farming, forestry, food and wood-using industry, biological research, fishing, hunting, camping. Christian faith has yet to come to real moral grips in all of these areas . . . We need more than Old Testament quotations plus a standard stewardship lesson, to dedicate *this* Lord's planet!

Books and Publications

Fog in the Mediterranean

A REVIEW ARTICLE

W. H. AUDEN

The Rebel (L'Homme Revolté). By Albert Camus. New York: A. Knopf, 1954.
273 pages. \$4.00.

The stimulus that led Mr. Camus to write this well-meaning but maddeningly woolly and verbose essay is his horror at the spectacle of our era "which dares to claim that it is the most rebellious that ever existed but only offers a choice of various types of conformity. The real passion of the twentieth century is servitude". Like all decent people, he hates injustice, cruelty, and the inquisitor type who would compel others by force and fear of death to accept his version of the true and the good. Is there, he asks, any alternative between passive acceptance of evil and the mass murders of organized revolution; is it possible, through an examination of the history of rebellion, to discover 'a sign at least concerning our right, or duty, to kill'; can it 'furnish the principle of a limited culpability'?

One would have thought that such an enquiry would have to go back a long way, but for Mr. Camus history begins in 1789. He considers literary figures like Rousseau, Sade, Dostoevski, Hegel, Marx, commissar prototypes like St. Just and Netchaiev, and the Russian anarchists like Kaliayev, who, alone among political types, seem to him worthy of admiration.

By the time he has finished the book, a non-French reader will find himself wondering why its title should be *The Rebel (l'Homme Revolté)* for it seems a curious term to apply to a person whom Mr. Camus defines as one who is able "to learn to live and to die, and in order to be a man, to refuse to be a god"; a Christian may well ask, "Why doesn't he write 'to learn to live and to die, and, admitting that he cannot become a god, accept the limitations of being a man'".

The reason why he has to cast his definition in a negative form is, I believe, the same as that which makes a right wing political party in France call itself Radical Socialist. For most Frenchmen history begins with the French Revolution, that is, with saying No to the past. Despite its acknowledged horrors, this, for the vast majority, was a good thing—only a tiny minority have ever wished for a restoration of the *Ancien Régime*. Consequently, they instinctively think of the right act as rebelling against evil rather than as an obeying of the good. Hence the ambivalence of feeling towards Communism among French intellectuals. However

W. H. Auden is a foremost poet of our time and a frequent lecturer in our colleges and universities. Among his best-known and more recent books are these: *The Double Man* (New York: Random House, 1941); *For the Time Being*, including "A Christmas Oratorio" (New York: Random House, 1944); *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Random House, 1947). *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1945) includes the first two works named and much of his earlier writing. His latest book is *Nones* (New York: Random House, 1951).

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horrified they may be morally, they cannot help feeling that to be against any revolution is reactionary and un-French.

II

It is impossible to understand the nature of revolution from an examination of only one, because what every revolution claims to be doing, establishing the New Jerusalem, is never what it is doing, which is establishing once and for all time in men's minds a particular freedom. That is why each revolution creates its own symbolic figure whose name is usually untranslatable and its own symbolic institution which is usually inimitable. In the case of the English Revolution of 1688, for example, these are the gentlemen and Parliament; in the case of the French Revolution they are *l'homme d'esprit* and *l'Ecole Normale*. The particular freedom won by the French Revolution was *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, the right of the best man to rise to the top irrespective of his social origin, and to follow the guidance of his own intelligence and heart rather than the set form of tradition.

Every revolution is of particular and even excessive benefit to some class, and in the case of the French Revolution this class is made up of writers and painters.

What seems so odd about many French writers on historical matters is, not that they should think French history the most important—all nationalities do that—but that they should so ignore their own history before 1789. Mr. Camus, for instance, writes as if the French had always had an absolute Monarch, as if Philip V had held the same view of his function as Louis XIV, forgetting that the Byzantine notion of the priest-king was only introduced into the West at the end of the Middle Ages when feudal civil wars and religious schism had made many ready to welcome a strong central authority at whatever cost. Had he considered medieval theories of sovereignty, Mr. Camus would have been compelled to recognize the contribution to human liberty made by the Papacy, and for an anti-clerical that might have been embarrassing. For it was the Popes of the 11th and 12th centuries who, by claiming the superiority of the spiritual to the temporal power, established the principle of double loyalty, to the universal truth on the one hand, and to one's native soil and community on the other, a principle which it is now clear is essential to freedom, and, lacking which, a secular or a theocratic absolutism is inevitable. As has happened all too often in revolutions, the theoreticians of the French Revolution, like Rousseau and St. Just, accepted without question the most pernicious premises of their enemies, i. e. instead of denying the whole idea of absolute sovereignty, they merely transferred it from the Crown to the People. Similarly, it never occurred to Marx, for all his insight into the influence on thought and behaviour of modes of production, to ask whether there might not be something hostile to life in the factory system as such, which no change from private to state ownership could cure, an oversight which was later to cost millions of peasants their lives.

III

Towards Christianity Mr. Camus is tolerant which is a pity for all; those like Blake and Nietzsche who have reacted violently have always done the Church a great service for their notion of orthodox Christian doctrine, though false, is derived from observing Christians in their age. There is no doubt, for example, that in Blake's time many Anglicans, while dutifully reciting the Nicene formulas, really thought of God in Arian terms, just as the sense of Nature declaring the glory of God and of the holiness of the flesh which the Christian doctrines of the creation and the Incarnation imply, were probably not conspicuous among Nietzsche's bourgeois Lutheran contemporaries.

Mr. Camus sought for and found the characteristic heresy of Christians in 1950, which must certainly exist, he could have helped us a great deal; in fact, he takes his notion of Christianity from its nineteenth century opponents. It is one thing to detest the Inquisition and to sympathize with its victims; it is another to describe a manichean type of heresy as follows: "Hellenism, in association with Christianity, then produces the admirable efflorescence of the Albigensian heresy . . . But with the Inquisition and the destruction of the Albigensian heresy, the Church again parts company with the world and with beauty, and gives back to history its pre-eminence over nature."

The antithesis Nature-History is very important to Mr. Camus, but when one tries to discover what precisely he means by either, one runs into an impenetrable fog. Apparently, the right attitude, which is held by the Greeks and the Mediterranean mind, is that nature should be obeyed in order to subjugate history; the wrong attitude, which is held by present-day Christians and Communists, and is all the fault of those nasty nordics, is that nature should be subjugated in order to obey history. But, unless he is an animist or a polytheist, what can Nature as distinct from History mean for him but that order of events which recur necessarily according to law and which man, since he participates in Nature, cannot disobey however hard he tries? Conversely, since he is not a communist but believes passionately in the reality and value of personal freedom, why should Mr. Camus defeat himself, by accepting the Hegelian-Marxian use of the word History which robs it of all meaning, since for them all historical events are natural events? To believe in freedom and the reality of the person means to believe that there is an order of unique (though analogous) events which occur, neither necessarily nor arbitrarily, but voluntarily, according to motive and provocation and for which, therefore, the actor is responsible, (since history is something man *makes*, it is meaningless to talk of *obeying* it,) that there is an historical order as distinct from a natural order, and that man participates in both. I am convinced that Mr. Camus does in fact believe this, in which case, he is bound to admit that the historical is superior to the natural in the sense that the former is responsible for the latter.

"One can reject," he writes, "all history and yet accept the world of the stars," and quotes with approval an apothegm by René Char, "Obsession with the

harvest and indifference to history are the two extremes of my bow." But what do these statements mean if not that an individual can take an historical decision to ignore politics (and the sufferings of his neighbor) and devote himself to astronomy or farming. This may or may not be the wisest course to take in this age, but it hardly seems more rebellious than the Christian precept "Resist not evil but . . ." of which Mr. Camus seems to disapprove. As a model for political action he offers us the Russian martyr-assassins like Kaliayev who "kill and die so that it shall be clear that murder is impossible". It is certainly admirable about these brave men and women that they accepted responsibility for their acts, though both the wisdom and the morality of killing another not because you disapprove of him personally but because you disapprove of his function is questionable. Then why must Mr. Camus rob their act of all significance by saying: "The sole but invincible hope of the rebel is incarnated, in the final analysis, in innocent murderers", which is precisely what they refused to be? The only innocent murderer in peace time is the public executioner.

Since Mr. Camus speaks so snootily of the North in contrast to the Mediterranean where "intelligence is intimately related to the blinding light of the sun." I shall be snooty in return; I think it a pity that he was not born an Englishman. had he been, he would know what his real political position is, liberal-conservative; he might well be a Christian; and he would certainly have written a more lucid book.

Plato and Natural Law

A REVIEW-ARTICLE

MICHAEL B. FOSTER

Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law. By John Wild. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953. xi and 259 pages. \$5.50.

Professor Wild's book falls into three parts, entitled respectively "Plato's Modern Enemies," "The Theory of Natural Law," and "Natural Law and Some Problems of Contemporary Ethics." In the first he considers the attacks of Plato (of which e. g. K. R. Popper's book *The Open Society and its Enemies* is perhaps the best known, at least in England), in which Plato is seen as an irrational dogmatist, militarist, totalitarian, racist, enemy of democracy and of the "open society". He thinks that this account of Plato is coming to be generally accepted.¹ And he sets out to refute it, on the ground that it is based on a misunderstanding of Plato's moral philosophy.

Plato's moral philosophy, according to Wild, is essentially a form of the theory of Natural Law—indeed he goes on to argue in his Second Part that Plato originated the Natural Law tradition of Western philosophy. It is a theory which

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bases morals upon ontology, finding its norms in nature and deriving the good for man from an understanding of human nature. It is thus both universalist (the norms are valid for all men) and 'realist' (in the technical philosophical sense, *i. e.* the norms are independent of human choice, will or subjective feeling).

It seems to me that Wild is quite right in two important points. Plato is, I think, to be understood as a 'Natural Law' theorist; and I agree entirely with Wild (Chapter V) that this is not disproved by the fact that the phrase "natural law" occurs seldom in Plato's works. The conception is contained already in Plato's view of "nature", which is fundamental to his philosophy (one must underline *Plato's* conception of nature—not that of modern natural science or of modern nationalism). And I agree that the basic error of Plato's modern critics is that they have not seen this. They have assumed that because Plato was clearly not a democrat or an individualist he must have been a collectivist and a totalitarian, and they have been blind to this element in Plato which does not fall in either category. Plato's *friends* may have been partly responsible for this blindness, by leaving out the element of Natural Law from their interpretation of him. Wild claims that it has been neglected hitherto by Plato's interpreters, and I would easily believe that this is true, at least of his nineteenth century interpreters. In any event, Wild seems to me in this to have done an important service in the cause of a true understanding of Plato and of rectifying a prevalent distortion.

On the other hand he interprets Plato too much on the model of a modern liberal democrat. Though Plato is not a totalitarian, yet there is a strangeness in him which this book ignores; for although natural Law is central to Plato's thought, it is for him a law of *inequality*.² From this derives the class-structure of his state and other features of his theory which offend democrats. Wild almost eliminates these features. It is true, he criticizes Plato in one passage (page 47), saying that "we miss some of the effective checks against dogmatism and tyranny which have been discovered in modern times, and a robust faith in the capacities of the common man for practical insight and sacrificial endeavour". But he does not see a fundamental difference between Platonism and the equalitarianism of modern democracy.

Wild includes two Christian writers (Reinhold Niebuhr and Arnold Toynbee) in his list of Plato's modern enemies. He seems to me less convincing in his rebuttal of their criticisms, than when he is refuting the other critics. Thus, for example, he says of Niebuhr that he is 'quite wrong in suggesting that the classical view of man is a "dualism" which identifies "the body with evil" and assumes "the essential goodness of mind or spirit"' (page 12). Though I have not read Niebuhr's writing on this point, I must confess that no evidence which Wild produces convinces me that Niebuhr is quite wrong in this.

Again, when he considers Toynbee's charge that Plato is "far too ready to employ the sword" (page 14), he seems to me not to meet this criticism on a deep enough level. We may easily grant his argument (pages 15-16) that Plato

was not an apostle of aggressive militarism either in his life or in his dialogues; and he puts his finger on a vital point when he remarks (page 17) that the real issue between Plato and his modern critic is in their differing conceptions of the power of reason, or philosophy ("Is there or is there not such a thing as philosophy? . . . philosophy in the Socratic sense, the search for ethical knowledge and insight into the basic structure of reality?" page 37). This truly corrects the charge of militarism brought against Plato (as it corrects also those of racialism, tribalism, totalitarianism). Plato justifies the use of force only when it is under the direction of reason. But when his has been granted, is there not still a gulf between the Platonic and the Christian message? According to Plato, the philosophic ruler, in order to save mankind, had to occupy the seat of power; this is a different notion from that of a King who rules from a Cross. In the light of this contrast is it not legitimate to impute to Plato a belief in the efficacy of the sword?

In respect of its criticism of modern philosophy also the book seems to me valuable as a corrective. It is easy for those who support modern trends in philosophy (the philosophy of Analysis, or "Scientific Philosophy", as Professor H. Reichenbach has called it) to regard their basic presuppositions as not presuppositions at all, but as assured results of the progress of thought, especially of logical advance. It is salutary therefore to have a metaphysics defended in which they are repudiated, as is may help us to discern within what was taken as assured the outlines of a competing metaphysic. Thus on pages 64 and following, the principle of 'logical atomism' (the view which regards existence "as made up exclusively of units which are fully determinate and actual") and the separation of fact and value are repudiated. These are both fundamental in modern positivist philosophy. When Wild says "essence is that principle in a thing which determines it and marks it off from others. Existence is *what separates it from nothing*, and allies it to other existents" (page 192, my italics), he is opening the door to a metaphysical ontology which modern philosophy deliberately closes. Such opposition will help us to see that other possibilities are open, to which modern philosophy makes us close our eyes. But I must add that the philosophical ontology which he defends is not a standpoint which I think it possible to *accept*. If we are to take a stand vis-a-vis modern philosophy, I believe it must be on a different ground than this—a definitely theological ground.

The criticism of modern ethical theories in this book is both polemical, and so summary as to be unenlightening. All theories which do not acknowledge the Natural Law conception are 'subjectivist', and modern ethical theories are lumped together under this head. This can distort badly as when hedonism, utilitarianism and Kantianism are ranked together as "subjectivistic types of ethical theory", "which assert that being is indifferent to value, and that norms are arbitrary human constructions" (page 166, my italics). Besides, this indiscriminate treatment of so many different opponents of Natural Law prevents us from discerning the special character of the contemporary opposition.

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Wild writes from an attitude of belief in Natural Law which, I confess, does not carry conviction to me. "Is there", he asks, "or is there not such a thing as philosophy, . . . the search for ethical knowledge and insight into the basic structure of reality?" Surely we must reply that there is not, and that these things, if they are to be gained, are not to be gained by an autonomous philosophy. The Platonic and Socratic faith in reason is not a live option for us, (we cannot be converted to it) nor, I should say, is a belief in the Natural Law which is independent of belief in God (such as Grotius expressed, when he "maintained that the basic principles of Natural Law would hold true even if it were granted that God did not exist". page 136, cf 119). The beliefs which are active in the world and which are really in conflict for the possession of men's minds seem to me rather to be belief in man through Christ as against belief in man without Christ?

Wild maintains that the principle of Natural Law is basically the same as that of Natural Rights,³ and that it would seem to be the only possible foundation for a world community based upon reason. (page 72). The transition which took place at the beginning of the modern period, when "Natural Rights" took the place of "Natural Law" as the basis of political thinking, has been the subject of some study recently—I do not know with what result. It seems to me important to elucidate its significance, and I do not think that is done in this book. We are told that Natural Law and Natural Rights theories are basically similar (e. g. pages 46, 171, 218, and elsewhere): yet they feel different, and until the difference is explained, we do not feel happy about the identity.

Notes

¹"In countless courses on government and philosophy in universities of England and the United States and throughout the English-speaking world, Plato is now generally used as an example of authoritarian and Fascist ideology." page 4.

²See an illuminating article by Gregory Vlastos, "Slavery in Plato's Thought", *Philosophical Review*, May, 1941.

³"The realistic doctrine of Natural Law has received its most recent, and in certain ways its most adequate, political formulation in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights". page 232.

The Realism of Erich Auerbach

NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.

Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. By Erich Auerbach. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. 563 pages. \$7.50.

The Princeton University Press has recently given students of the history of literature and culture one of the handsomest gifts which it has been their good fortune to receive in many years. It is Mr. Willard Trask's translation of Erich Auerbach's remarkable book *Mimesis* which, in the years since the first appearance of the German edition in 1946, has become well-nigh a modern classic and which it is now a blessing for American readers to have available in English.

Mr. Auerbach's book should have a tonic effect upon us for more than one reason. To read an interpretation of some of the great moments of the Western tradition in literature that is as penetrating and as richly filled with fresh insights as this is, of course, to have the mind wonderfully stretched and to be furnished with fascinating new perspectives upon ancient and modern writers—like Homer and Petronius, Dante and Rabelais, Balzac and Stendhal, the Goncourts and Virginia Woolf—with whom one would already doubtless have wanted to claim familiarity. And to have the old and the familiar revived and given new urgency is always to have had a service rendered to our cultural life. But the importance of this book has just now, I believe, still another dimension. For, in those who are reading it, it is reinstating—at a time when this badly needs to be done—a sense of the true greatness of the vocation of literary criticism, when that vocation is taken up with sobriety and good faith by a man of great gifts of intellect and sensibility. This has, of course, been a great age of criticism, and we still have, on the American scene particularly, many critics of great distinction whose names we all know and whom we therefore need not mention individually here. But they are, most of them, men who are now in their fifties and early sixties, and though many of them continue to grow, their younger followers have too frequently used their masters' texts as authoritative concordances and have too frequently hardened their originally fresh insights into authoritative dogma—so that they themselves often strike us today as being mere academicians, in the worst sense of that word. They study with enormous thoroughness their Eliot and their Faulkner and ignore the *Odyssey* (except as it is to be referred to in their study of Joyce) and the *Canterbury Tales* and *War and Peace*. They patronize those writers whose work does not seem easily to lend itself to analysis in terms of *irony* and *myth* and *symbol*; and they condescend to their colleagues in criticism who do not choose to use this particular critical apparatus. The characteristic tone of their published work is that of a grim and humorless captiousness, and this is doubtless something of what Mr. Malcolm Cowley had in mind when he recently referred to our present period in criticism as an "Alexandrian" age.

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But Mr. Auerbach's recent book presents us with the example of a man who has obviously, first of all, felt it necessary to acquire an enormous amount of learning in stylistics and philology and in social and intellectual history before setting up as a critic, and who then, in order to carry out his task, has felt it necessary to study the whole of Western literature—not a single national literature, not a single period, not a single major figure, but the entire tradition. And thus it is that, standing in the modern tradition of Vossler and Spitzer and Ernst Curtius, he exemplifies a kind of literary scholarship that has few representatives today in the English-speaking world. And when one thinks of those breathless, nervously written little volumes of precious essays—so often unsupported by really sound learning or indeed by anything else other than temperament and ill-humor—that Criticism, Inc. is beginning to give us at the present time, one cannot but be grateful for the broad, humane scholarship of this distinguished European man of letters that requires for its expression not a thin little volume of essays but a tremendous book of almost 600 pages, that has to take as its subject nothing less than "The Representation of Reality in Western Literature," and that yet expresses Andrew Marvell's sigh on the epigraph page, "Had we but world enough and time . . ."

Mr. Auerbach's method involves an intensive analysis, in the order of their chronological succession, of a great number of selected passages from literature which he regards as crucial instances of "the great tradition." He begins with the famous scene in the XIXth book of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus, after twenty years of being buffeted about by the wind and the waves and the caprice of the gods in his effort to get back home, finally returns to Ithaca, presents himself at the palace in disguise, and is recognized by his old nurse Eurycleia, who, in bathing his feet, discovers the scar on his leg which she knows her long-lost master has borne since boyhood. And the final chapter is devoted to two passages: the first is a narrative passage from the fifth section of the first part of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, in which Mrs. Ramsay, in anticipation of an expected trip with her six-year old son James to a lighthouse not far from the Ramsays' summer home, is measuring against little James' leg a brown stocking which is among some clothing which she is preparing as a gift for the lighthouse-keeper's little boy. And the second passage is that occurring toward the close of the first section of Volume I of Proust's *Le Temps retrouvé* in which the narrator recalls an evening during his childhood when, his mother not being able to put him to bed with the usual good-night kiss because there was a guest for supper, he couldn't get to sleep without the usual ceremony and indeed remained awake in a state of hypertension till, following the guest's departure, as his parents were preparing to retire for the night, they became sensible of the child's distress, and his father, departing from his customary severity, bade his wife spend the night in the little boy's room to calm him down.

Between these two extremes of ancient and modern literature to which the first and final chapters are devoted, Mr. Auerbach, in the eighteen intervening chapters, gives us the full text of selected passages from major figures in the tradition like Tacitus, Dante, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Molière, Voltaire, Schiller, Stendhal, Balzac and Zola; from minor figures like Ammianus Marcellinus and Antoine de la Sale, writers known perhaps only to specialists; and from books such as Augustine's *Confessions*, Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Arthurian Romances* of Chrétien de Troyes, the twelfth-century Christmas play, the *Mystère d'Adam*, and the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon. And he ranges all the way from classical antiquity to early medieval Latin literature and from Biblical literature to the French Enlightenment and on down to the great realists of the French nineteenth century. He does not confine himself to the major *genres* of imaginative literature—to poetry, drama, and the novel; but, instead, he works also with passages from memoirs, essays, histories, theological texts, and many other types of literature. For what he desires to give us is not literary history in the strict sense, but, rather, a history of European personality of which the historian or the theologian may well provide documentation as relevant as that furnished by the poet or the novelist.

Now what is done with this anthology of passages? Mr. Auerbach's way of working, it can first of all be said, involves the closest kind of analysis of texts with which he chooses to deal. The kind of inspection to which he submits his texts is, however, not quite of the sort to which the critical practice in recent times of men like Cleanth Brooks and R. P. Blackmur or William Empson and F. R. Leavis in the English-speaking world has accustomed us. He does not concentrate upon *irony* and *texture* or upon verbal ambiguities and symbolic patterns. He works rather in the tradition of stylistic analysis called *Stilforschung* which has been influential in modern German criticism, and he is primarily attentive to grammatical and syntactical structures and to diction. And upon the basis of this dimension of a literary text he infers an author's "attitudes" toward human life and the strategems which he employs by way of expressing them. Then this leads him on to essays in social and intellectual history whose purpose is to draw a circle of definition around the periods and cultures and ideological atmospheres against the background of which a given writer's work is to be comprehended.

The title which Mr. Auerbach has given to his book, of course, immediately puts us in mind of the whole Aristotelian doctrine of art as imitation, and this in turn may lead us to suppose that he is purporting to offer us a history of realism in the development of Western literature. But, obviously, when as knowledgeable a literary scholar as Mr. Auerbach does nothing with Chaucer or with the great English realists of the eighteenth century, barely anything at all with the great Russians, and nothing with the traditions of realism and naturalism in twentieth-century British and American fiction, he is not interested in giving us a history of literary realism—at least not as "realism" was understood by the author of

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Le Roman Expérimental or by many of its major modern theorists. What he wants rather to do is to look at those moments in the Western tradition in literature when the everyday scene of human life was viewed with tragic seriousness and to ask what it was that made this possible. And his inquiry into this question leads him to the conclusion that the Western imagination has, historically, been enabled in literature to weave around ordinary, everyday reality the graces and glories of high tragedy only when it has abandoned the classical doctrine of levels of style. That doctrine—which was a chief bequest of the Greeks to the ancient world and to all subsequent ages giving birth to a revival of the classical spirit—held that there are distinct levels of literary representation that are determined by the stations of life from which a writer draws his human materials. There is, ancient theorists held, a high style and a low style, the former being reserved for the heroic personages and sublime events of epic poetry and tragic drama and the latter being reserved for realistic depictions of ordinary life which fell, they thought, in the province of comedy. Indeed, wherever realistic depictions of ordinary life appear in the literature of antiquity the effect is intended to be comic.

This rigoristic doctrine of stylistic levels was, however, broken by Christianity, whose ingress into the Western tradition made possible, for the first time really in European literature, a tragic realism. For the archetypal human drama related by the Biblical narrative was by no means enacted exclusively by persons of high rank and station. It is, indeed, precisely at this point that the Old Testament narrative, for example, differs so sharply from the traditions of Greek literature. And just here Mr. Auerbach, in his first chapter, establishes with great penetration several significant contrasts between Homeric poetry and the Old Testament. Homer was, of course, far removed from the hierarchical doctrine of the separation of styles which was later to gain almost universal acceptance throughout the ancient world—and yet, Mr. Auerbach's point is that, he was very much closer to it than the Old Testament. He is not, to be sure, afraid to mingle occasionally the realism of daily life with the sublime and the tragic—and Mr. Auerbach cites, as a case in point, the famous recognition scene in the *Odyssey* of the foot-washing and the discovery of Odysseus' scar by his old nurse Eurycleia. But, even so, "the great and sublime events in the Homeric poems take place far more exclusively and unmistakably among the members of a ruling class; and these are far more untouched in their heroic elevation than are the Old Testament figures, who can fall much lower in dignity (consider, for example, Adam, Noah, David, Job); and finally, domestic realism, the representation of daily life, remains in Homer in the peaceful realm of the idyllic, whereas, from the very first, in the Old Testament stories, the sublime, tragic, and problematic take shape precisely in the domestic and commonplace: scenes such as those between Cain and Abel, between Noah and his sons, between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, between Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau, and so on, are inconceivable in the Homeric style" (p. 22). The Old Testament heroes are, to be sure, the "bearers of the divine will," and yet "the pendulum swing of their lives" is much wider than that of the Homeric heroes:

they are "fallible, subject to misfortune and humiliation. . . . There is hardly one of them who does not, like Adam, undergo the deepest humiliation—and hardly one who is not deemed worthy of God's personal intervention and personal inspiration. Humiliation and elevation go far deeper and far higher than in Homer, and they belong basically together" (p. 18). So it is no wonder, then, says Mr. Auerbach, that the great figures of the Old Testament—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Job—have about them a kind of concreteness, a kind of directness, a kind of historicity, that the major figures of the Homeric world do not have, for the Hebraic mind is controlled by no impulse to segregate the noumenal from the contingencies of existential reality such as that which captured the Greek mind as early as Homer and which finally resulted in the emergence of the classical doctrine of stylistic levels. And, of course, the "realism" of the Biblical tradition, in Mr. Auerbach's view, gains its consummate expression in the New Testament account of the most sublime occurrence of human history—the scene of which is not a magnificently appointed palace but a lowly manger in Bethlehem and a lonely hill on Calvary.

Now it is this "realism" of the Biblical tradition, Mr. Auerbach argues, which was a chief formative power in the Christian culture of the Middle Ages and which re-emerged in the mysteries and moralities and allegories of the time. And he finds the clue to medieval realism in the old Christian concept of *figura*, a term which put us in mind of the early convention in Biblical exegesis, dating from the late patristic period, of viewing the events and characters of the Old Testament as anticipatory or *prefigurative* of those of the New. These early methods of Biblical study have, of course, long since been dismissed by modern scholars as "biblical alchemy" (the phrase, I believe, is Harnack's), because of their highly un-historical and rationalistic character. But what was important in them was a certain way of looking at reality: what was involved in the figural interpretation of Old Testament characters and episodes as phenomenal prophecies of the characters and events of the New Testament was a sense of the essential unity of the human story—a story whose beginning was God's creation of the world, whose climax was Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and whose conclusion will be Christ's second coming and the Last Judgment. "In principle, this great drama contains everything that occurs in world history. In it all the heights and depths of human conduct and all the heights and depths of stylistic expression find their morally or aesthetically established right to exist; and hence there is no basis for a separation of the sublime from the low and everyday, for they are indissolubly connected in Christ's very life and suffering. Nor is there any basis for concern with the unities of time, place, or action, for there is but one place—the world; and but one action—man's fall and redemption" (p. 158).

Thus it was that the ordinary reality of everyday was enabled to become a vital element of medieval Christian art and particularly of the Christian drama; and thus it was that the great tragic realism of Dante's *Commedia* became possible.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

The theonomous unity that had sustained a Dante was, of course, destined to be broken with the advent of the autonomous humanism of the Renaissance which progressively obscured the figural quality of experience. And in Boccaccio and Rabelais, in Shakespeare and in Cervantes we come upon writers who do not, characteristically, make any effort to envisage man as related to transcendent reality. The great personages of Shakespeare's tragic world, for example, are, as Paul Tillich has remarked of the figures in Rembrandt's portraits, "like self-enclosed worlds—strong, lonely, tragic but unbroken . . . expressing the ideals of personality of a humanistic Protestantism." These writers were still, to be sure, shaped by the Christian conscience, but it was not any longer their habit to regard man's relation to transcendent reality as giving a meaning and a center to personal life. They tended rather to regard the experience of life, with all of its tragedy and its hope, as determining the meaning of existence, and they found the clue to human fulfillment not in man's dependence upon transcendent grace but rather in the fullest actualization of the humanity latent in each individual.

Then in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there came a rebirth of classicism—and, with an inflexibility and a rigor that would doubtless have been regarded as excessive even in classical antiquity, the hierarchical doctrine of style was reestablished in literary theory. The consequences (particularly in French drama of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and in the sentimental bourgeois dramas and novels of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century German literature) of the highly rigid proscriptions with respect to style and the representation of reality which neo-classicism enforced upon the writers of the period are well known. And Mr. Auerbach reminds us of them again in order to confront us with the major crisis in the history of realism that occurred at the beginning of the modern period and from which "the great tradition" of realism was redeemed, this time not by Christianity but, by the advent of modern historicism, or rather what he refers to as "historism."

The modern movement of historicism was, of course, really a consequence of the Romantic protest against the Age of Reason: it was in part, that is, an expression of the Romantic protest against the static mechanism of the Newtonian *Weltanschauung*, and a protest which was itself made in behalf of a geneticist view of the universe as a process of growth and evolution. It was in the age of Goethe that this movement first reached its maturity, that time and history first began to assume fundamental importance for the modern mind. And the key figure in this development was Herder. Herder was himself doubtless greatly influenced by that strange genius of the early eighteenth century, Giovanni Battista Vico, but it is in him, and especially in his brilliant *Philosophy of History*, that we find a main source of the modern idea of history. It was Herder who taught the modern mind to be cognizant of the problem of time, and Hegel's remark in his *Aesthetik* (which was later to be taken over by Taine) that "Every work of art belongs to its time, its people, and its environment" was really an appropriation from him. Indeed, Herder is the starting-point of that whole tendency of modern historicism,

as represented by such thinkers as Hegel and Ranke and Taine and Marx, to regard history as a special kind of reality, as the sphere of purely relative events, all of which are woven into one general pattern and all of which are exhaustively explicable by reference to purely immanent forces. And it is Mr. Auerbach's contention that it was this movement that prepared the ethos in which the dead weight of the neo-classical past could be lifted in the nineteenth century and in which the resurgence of an authentic realism in European literature could again become possible. For apart from this ethos, he feels, the radically *realistic* determination to represent man "as embedded in a total reality, political, social, and economic, which is concrete and constantly evolving" (p. 463) could not have taken hold of writers like Stendhal and Balzac and Flaubert and the Goncourts and Zola, to the analysis of whose work he devotes many of his finest pages.

Then, finally, he gives us an account of twentieth-century realism in his last chapter which is devoted to Virginia Woolf, Proust, and Joyce. And here his feeling seems to be that we are now by way of entering into a new crisis in the history of realism, for the stream-of-consciousness method exemplified in these representative writers of our period Mr. Auerbach is inclined to regard as a "symptom of the confusion and helplessness, . . . a mirror of the decline of our world" (p. 551). Particularly in Joyce's last works and in many of the other important novels of our day "which employ multiple reflection of consciousness," he declares, "There is often something confusing, something hazy about them, something hostile to the reality which they represent. We not infrequently find a turning away from the practical will to live, or delight in portraying it under its most brutal forms. There is hatred of culture and civilization, brought out by means of the subtlest stylistic devices which culture and civilization have developed, and often a radical and fanatical urge to destroy. Common to almost all of these novels is haziness, vague indefinability of meaning: precisely the kind of uninterpretable symbolism which is also to be encountered in other forms of art of the same period" (p. 551). Once again, it appears that there are signs of an approaching debilitation in literature of the capacity to represent the common life of mankind on earth.

Here, then, is the design of a book with which it is to be hoped that great pains will be taken by those who are interested in the problems that it explores. And great pains it must be, if any fruitful use is to be made of it at all, for otherwise its purpose is likely to be misunderstood. This is so primarily because the extreme tenuity with which Mr. Auerbach elaborates his fundamental theoretical conceptions may well conceal the fact, except from the most careful reader, that his book is not simply a descriptive account of the fortunes and misfortunes of realism in the history of European literature. It is, of course, that too, but it is also something more than that, for, when it is scrutinized closely, it appears actually to be putting forth a kind of thesis. The thesis is nowhere highly schematized: indeed, it is only hinted at here and there and again, for Mr. Auerbach shares with many other literary men a certain skittishness about running the risks that must be in-

curred when we enter the arena of philosophic discussion, where ideas have to be handled with a kind of severity and rigor which are not of the sort usually cultivated by the man whose personal culture is literary rather than philosophic. But, nevertheless, when we examine his book carefully, it does gradually become clear that, beyond his desire to describe certain of the main successes and failures of literary realism in the European tradition, he wants also to put forward a normative conception of realism in literature. He seems to be saying something of this sort, that literature of the greatest depth and intensity exhibits a special kind of realism: the nature of this realism is, however, adequately defined neither by the properties of comedy nor by those of tragedy—neither by the comic moralism say, of Molière nor by the aristocratic humanism of Shakespeare. The trouble with Molière is that, though he achieved “the greatest measure of realism which could still please in the fully developed classical literature of the France of Louis XIV” (p. 365), he yet “seeks the individually real only for the sake of its ridiculousness, and to him ridiculousness means deviation from the normal and customary” (p. 362). His approach to the common life is “entirely moralistic; that is to say, it accepts the prevailing structure of society, takes for granted its justification, permanence, and general validity, and castigates the excesses occurring within its limits as ridiculous” (p. 365). And the trouble with Shakespeare is that all those characters whom he “treats in the sublime and tragic manner are of high rank. He does not, as the Middle Ages did, conceive of ‘everyman’ as tragic” (p. 314). Neither the middle nor the lower classes are ever rendered tragically. “His conception of the sublime and tragic is altogether aristocratic” (p. 315). Nor does Mr. Auerbach have any very high regard for the English novelists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And in the great Russians of the nineteenth century he finds a predilection for a kind of rhetorical didacticism which is not to his taste. Indeed, as Professor René Wellek has remarked in this connection of his work, it appears that only certain “passages in the Bible and Dante and, among the moderns, in Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert and Zola fulfill Mr. Auerbach’s implied definition of realism.” And that definition calls for a mode of organization of the human story in literature that combines tragic depth with the empiricist concreteness of historicism—which, curiously enough, in the whole tradition, he seems to find most unsatisfactorily embodied in Stendhal and Balzac.

My own feeling is that Mr. Auerbach’s program for literature is not very far removed from that which M. Jean-Paul Sartre has put forward in his doctrine of *la littérature engagée*. There are, of course, many unfortunate excrescences that attach to Sartre’s manner of formulating this doctrine and that cannot be gone into on this present occasion: yet the notion that literature, if it is to be vital and serious, must remain in close contact with the world and that the writer must always seek to enter into untrammelled engagement with the full life of his time—this is a notion for which many of us surely can command considerable sympathy at a time when all is “in pieces, all coherence gone,” when the fire is put out and the sun is lost and when the writer, if he is to claim our attention at all, must sug-

gest a way of reading the human condition and a counterpoise to chaos. So, insofar as Mr. Auerbach's doctrine of realism involves this kind of demand, it certainly represents a proposal to which the serious reader will want to be attentive.

Yet there is still difficulty, for the tradition whose authority he invokes in behalf of this doctrine is hardly one which seems capable of giving it the strongest support. That is to say, he tends rather oddly to find, as has already been noticed, the best expressions of a tragic realism in the modern tradition in Stendhal and Balzac; and it is, in fact, the general movement of nineteenth-century literary realism, particularly on its French side, that seems to claim his deepest sympathies, because of its historical and "atmospheric" quality, because of its strongly historicist bias. Now it is true, of course, that the profound concern with the temporal predicament of man which is the absorbing preoccupation of Stendhal and Balzac and Flaubert and Zola gives to their literature the kind of violent power which we are once again finding today so compelling. And yet when we look at certain of their naturalistic heirs in the twentieth-century situation—at Theodore Dreiser, say, or the Dos Passos of U.S.A.—in whom their historicism has been reduced to its most radical premises, we begin to wonder how compatible is the outlook of a secular historicism with the depth of tragic vision.

The names of Dreiser and Dos Passos are, of course, amongst those which put us in mind of that current in our recent literature which has wanted to give us the illusion of history by eradicating the distinction between life and art and by giving us so large a slice of the crude, raw stuff of life as to make us forget when we read their books that we are reading fiction. And thus by banishing themselves from their books and muffling their own voices, in the manner of the good photographer or reporter, they have only reinforced, as Professor Lionel Trilling has said, "the faceless hostility of the world and have tended to teach us that we ourselves are not creative agents and that we have no voice, no tone, no style, no significant existence," that we are simply automatons of the historical process.

Had not Mr. Auerbach what one feels to be a certain temperamental aversion to philosophic formulations of the issues with which he is dealing, he might well have more nearly apprehended the ultimate antinomy between the tragic vision and a secular historicism by recalling the nature of Kierkegaard's objection to Hegel—who remains perhaps the great philosophic spokesman for the modern historicist temper. And that objection was simply based upon Kierkegaard's profound distaste for the kind of outlook that he found in Hegel which threatened completely to engulf man in some objective system of historical circumstance of which the human subject could only be another insignificant unit. He found such a denial of selfhood utterly incompatible with his own tragic vision, and I should suppose that his acute dissatisfaction with Hegel and all that he represented would be shared by many other great tragic realists in both the literary and philosophic traditions—though expressed, to be sure, in many different ways. For the greatest tragedians have not only seen man as a creature thrown into the world and "caught in a temporal web," but also as a creature having links with a reality transcending his

temporal history. And it has, indeed, been upon this Janus-faced character of the human situation that they have chiefly dwelt. They see man as a creature who participates in the historical process not merely as an item of it but also as an agent—whose freedom and vitality are, however, qualified by the structures of nature and of human society. Their's has, that is to say, very often been the problem of freedom and necessity—but a problem which cannot be arrived at, at least in one of its aspects, upon the basis of the kind of deterministic historicism that constituted an aspect of the philosophical *Weltanschauung* possessed by those nineteenth-century realists from whose legacy Mr. Auerbach would derive a normative conception of tragic realism. A doctrine of man, in other words, that immerses the person in the social continuum, however much it may encourage the imaginative writer's attentiveness to the concrete details of man's historical existence, must inevitably obscure those dimensions of the human problem with which the tragedian is characteristically concerned and which come into the circle of our awareness only when the distinctiveness of the human spirit is seen as consisting in its capacity to transcend the historical process and even to transcend itself for the sake of contemplating the meaning of its existence—or for the sake of deceiving itself about that meaning.

To suggest that Mr. Auerbach's fundamental point of view is to be scrutinized critically is not, however, by one iota to discount the truly monumental greatness of this book. With an astounding erudition he has passed in review the major literary ideals of Western culture, and, in the process, has given us a history of the representation of reality in European literature which no responsible student of literature and the history of ideas can afford to overlook. It is, indeed, I believe, a book that is destined to become (if I may use a phrase of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, without at all having in mind his special meaning) a part of the "primary literature" of our period.

A Significant Centenary: The S.C.M. Book Club

The S.C.M. (Student Christian Movement) Book Club has recently issued book No. 100, entitled by Theodore H. Robinson. For seventeen years the S.C.M. Book Club has been steadily producing in popular form the results of the best contemporary Christian thinking in compact, attractive and readable volumes.

The books are selected by a hard working and distinguished editorial committee, including Alan Richardson, Cecil Northcott, Olive Wyon, Alec R. Vidler, and others, working together with Ronald Gregor Smith who is the Editor and Managing Director of the S.C.M. Press in London.

It is the conviction of this editorial committee that there can be no more important contribution to the needs of contemporary men and women than the attempt to help them to understand in direct, personal and concrete terms what the

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Christian religion is and how it speaks to the modern man's condition. The S. C. M. Book Club has been trying to do just that. The list of authors and titles of the first 100 books is strikingly rich in variety. It has been an achievement to have assembled so many writers—many of them highly distinguished scholars—from many different backgrounds and confessions, approaching the center from many different points of view. As for instance: Charles E. Raven, H. H. Farmer, John C. Bennett, Olive Wyon, Emil Brunner, Alan Richardson, Stephen Neill, Norman Snaith, Norman Sykes, T. H. Robinson, A. M. Hunter, and many many more.

Informed and 'existential' Bible reading is, as it were, the gravitational field for all study of Christian theology. Within that field the Book Club has tried to arrange titles as varied and diverse in treatment as possible. There have been biographies of Christian leaders, studies of different periods of Church history and different expressions of Christian life and enterprise. There have been books about prayer, public worship, the practice of personal religion, the insight and rewards of the mystics, the secrets of the saints and their witness. Some are frankly personal 'confessions', and others are attempts to evaluate the political and social movements of the world-revolution in Christian terms.

Twenty years ago the problem was different, today it is that the barren negations of secularism are forcing people to find a secure foundation for personal life and social reconstruction. Man cannot live on dust and ashes. There is strong evidence that the religious tide is coming in again. Everywhere there are seekers after Christianity. Can the Churches meet them and satisfy their need? Once again the intellectual initiative is in Christian hands, and effectual strategies of evangelism must be educational in form.

There is now the greatest opportunity before the Churches and their concern in higher education. To it, we trust the next one hundred volumes from the S. C. M. Book Club will make their lively contribution.¹

Through its seventeen years of continuous publication members have quickly realized that the Club was not just a book-selling scheme. They have felt they really belonged to something in which they have had a real share in both its work and program.

The books are published in London and are now available to American readers from S. C. M. Book Club headquarters in Chicago. \$4.00 is the annual membership fee, including six books, one every two months. Recent books have been: No. 96 *Mercy and Sacrifice* by Norman Snaith; No. 97 *The English Religious Tradition* by Norman Sykes; No. 98 *The Altar Fire* by Olive Wyon; No. 99 *Christian Deviations* by Horton Davies; and No. 100 *Job and His Friends* by T. H. Robinson. Write to The S. C. M. Book Club, 81 W. Van Buren Street, Chicago, 5, Illinois.

¹The above statements have been quoted in large part from an appraisal of the Book Club's first 100 books by Bishop F. R. Barry, author of book No. 1, *What has Christianity to say?*

Five Study Booklets

The National Student Council of the YMCA and YWCA has just published five study booklets. They are edited by Fern Babcock and Edward L. Nestingen and have been prepared in connection with the Y's National Student Assembly, which is to be held at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, December 27, 1954, to January 2, 1955. These booklets developed out of the Assembly planning process and reflect concerns and emphases of students, faculty and staff members throughout the country.

These excellently designed publications are written by competent authors and in terms of decisions we all face as students, as citizens, as persons. The underlying theme of the series is that God is active in a changing world. They explore the meaning of the biblical perspective for our day-by-day living and what God calls us to be and do now, as persons and as members of Christian campus groups.

The booklets in the series include the following: *The Inescapable Question: Where Are You?* by Howard C. Kee, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Drew Theological School; *Your Freedom is in Trouble* by Paul L. Lehmann, Professor of Applied Christianity at Princeton Theological Seminary; *You, the Nation and the World* by Ernest W. Lefever and Herman F. Reissig—Mr. Lefever is Associate Executive Secretary of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the National Council of Churches, and Mr. Reissig is Secretary for International Relations of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches; *Faith, Sex and Love* by William Hamilton, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School; and, *You in the University* by Seymour A. Smith, Assistant Professor of Religion in Higher Education at the Yale Divinity School, and a group of fourteen students who engaged in the process of preparing the material with Dr. Smith. The covers of the booklets were designed by Chester Tanaka.

These are booklets which, because of their high calibre, are well worthy of extensive study in our colleges and universities. Each booklet includes questions which can prompt and guide group discussion and corporate study; additional suggestions for reading are included so that the specific topics in hand may be pursued further. Single copies cost .25c; the set of five costs \$1.00. Copies should be ordered directly from either the Student YMCA, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y., or the Student YWCA, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

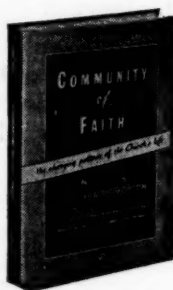
The Sign of Jonah

The Sign of Jonah, a play by Guenter Rutenborn, has just been published by the Lutheran Student Association of America, 327 South LaSalle Street, Chicago 4, Illinois. It sells at twenty-five cents per copy. No royalty is charged on purchases of ten copies for amateur productions (where no admission is charged). In a somewhat surrealistic sense it is a dramatic "Bible study for post-war time in the twentieth century," to quote its preface.

The drama sets forth a powerful indictment of modern man, and draws its audience inevitably into the fellowship of shared guilt for the failures of our day. The author has done an excellent job of bringing Jonah, Daniel's Babylon, and the whole message of Christian redemption into focus in modern times.

While it ought not to need this type of advertisement, it is worth noting that the play, only about an hour in length, was a commercial success, enjoying a long run on West Berlin's "Broadway." It is now available for amateur production in this country, and we are greatly in the debt of the Lutheran Student Association for bringing it to us in an excellent and playable translation. It deserves wide circulation and use.

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Reports and Notices

A Conversation with Dr. Marjorie Reeves*

A REPORT BY J. EDWARD DIRKS

An educator from Britain upon first being introduced directly to higher education in the United States is impressed immediately with the absence of a sharp distinction between secondary and higher educational levels. The closing years of high school seem to merge into the early years of college; then, somewhere, usually at about the mid-point in the college career, there is a rather apparent leap toward greater maturity—the kind of maturity which is expected rather generally at the graduate level. This impression is particularly important in relation to the social tasks which are given to American colleges and universities; the ideal of universal education tends to emphasize these tasks rather than those which are specifically educational in an academic or technical sense. Here there is real difference with British educational patterns, and these are perhaps more significant than some others which are frequently pointed out. Moreover,

since the real break is usually at the point between sophomore and junior years in college, some of the best students from the secondary level are unchallenged by "lower college" work and a number of these may remain uninterested throughout the rest of their college years as well. Insofar as this is true, it appears that problems concerning motivation are intimately connected with the role society itself gives to the educational system.

The second impression is related to this. It concerns what are called "general" or "core" courses—the studies in which all students engage and then become the basis for some, and frequently limited, specialization. Educational theory has, in general, been based—as it is in England—upon the view that higher education should encourage specialized study, that education is taking possession of a significant field of study and concentrating almost solely upon it. The preoccupation in America with general courses, which is no doubt necessary in light of education's social function, leads to a rather strange array of "major fields". These include various forms of self-expression, vast stretches of cultural material, or technological and vocational interests, rather than areas of subject matter, narrowly conceived. There appears to be almost no passion for the study of language. The tremendously exciting side of this impression is the way in which intensely practical interests are frequently linked with abstract concepts; there seems to be no

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*Dr. Marjorie Reeves is Vice-Principal of St. Anne's College and lecturer in History at Oxford University. During the summer of 1954 she travelled in the United States as guest of the Commission on Christian Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. and met with many diverse college and university groups. The evening prior to her return to England a small number of persons engaged her in conversation concerning her impressions. Notes taken at that time are the substance of this report; not all of the views set forth here are, however, those which Dr. Reeves strongly advocated or set forth, since some were developed in the conversation by the entire group.

idea that cannot be grasped and put to use.

But the major peril involved in the approach to education via general studies is that, while this is intended to provide a framework of knowledge, it frequently means only that certain common courses have been taken by all students. How does an American educator know that a student upon graduation has mastered a structured body of knowledge? Is it not possible that vocational interests and the social functions of education have, in fact, diverted academic institutions away from their primary educational tasks? In any event, here certainly is a basic difference between British and American Higher education: To what extent has the academic community the responsibility for providing students with an already structured body of knowledge, and to what extent are students responsible for providing and discovering the structure for themselves? It appears that in Britain the former course is taken, while in America the second is taken, despite the emphasis upon general education. Is there a middle course?

The significance of such issues as these is very real for Christians in education. It appears that the thinking of students on religious issues (as on political issues) is on the level of personal problems, particularly in the area of morality, and not on the more mature level of Christian vocation in study and action. This is evident by taking into account how important "labels" are for students; many throw them about and assume that the underlying issues are solved in this way. There is a very encouraging effort being made by the

Churches in their student conferences to push to the deeper issues themselves. For example, one conference focused specifically on the big questions in theology, such as the interpretation of the Bible, and the Incarnation, and on the big "university question," the nature of objectivity and criticism of the academic situation from a Biblical standpoint. However, much of the thinking of Christians in education does not appear to bring together the issues of faith and knowledge; in this sense, it is not mature and does not lead to a fruitful sense of interrelation between the disciplines of knowledge and the heritage of Christian faith. At the same time, it seems difficult to find what might be called a structured order of this interrelationship. This is seldom provided either by the college or university (despite requirements in religious studies by church colleges) or by the churches in their relationships to higher education. Is this central issue avoided by default on the part of all groups?

Among members of faculties, revealed as they attended and participated in many conferences, there is an interest in exploring the relationship between the fundamental purpose of the university and Christian faith. The universities and colleges find their meaning in the quest for and application of knowledge, *i. e.*, in research and teaching. It seems important and exciting therefore to ask: How is scholarship itself a form of Christian obedience? This leads to the other primary questions: What is intended when "neutrality" is claimed by teachers? To what extent does it frequently hide and serve as a guise for an

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"anti-Christian line," or a mechanistic or humanistic perspective on man? In the public universities, the growth of church-sponsored "foundation" programs indicate the way around the disallowances of courses in religion and university-sponsored religious programs. And, though great things are being done in the foundations, why does it seem so often to be true that the faculty then leaves religion and all of its issues for education to these foundations while these "university pastors" assume that the vital center of these is on the campus? Does this not mean that religion is an off-campus affair, and that, in fact, the sense of Christian obedience on the campus is lost? Christian vocation in terms of the relationship between faith and the disciplines, and research or teaching in them, can be a very challenging concept. This is often, however, not made challenging enough to teachers. But, perhaps the same challenge needs to confront the "university pastors" who so often "run" things instead of coming to grips with central issues in faith and knowledge. May it not be, therefore, that the cause of Christian vocation in education is, actually, lost completely in the great gulf which separates the campus pastors from faculty members and the way each assumes it is the other's task? In many cases the greatly needed bridges are not built. Yet, it must be obvious to all that the real impetus for relating Christian faith to the disciplines must come from members of faculties, and with the assistance of, but not primarily from the pastors or students.

It is hard to say, therefore, that there is a spontaneous concern even among

teachers, for the so-called "university question." Most of the persons who come to conferences at least are devoted liberals who are personally Christians, but who have not understood their work as a vocation, *i.e.*, as a means of Christian witness. The reasons for this are difficult to trace. In part, it may be due to a type of religious individualism; however, the other reason may be the fact that the American higher educational system does not, in actuality, have historical continuity with the Medieval period, but with the nineteenth century Continental universities. It is strange to try to remind persons of the Christian center of education, when in fact such a center did not exist historically for American universities; without a consciousness of loss, there can, of course, be no easy way of recalling a "lost" heritage.

The problem for all who are concerned with a Christian interpretation of the academic enterprise is that they must first convince their colleagues, despite some historical evidence to the contrary, that the basic concern of Christian faith is for freedom, not domination. In our day we may need to find ways of saying that Christian faith can, in the last analysis and when all other positions have failed, guarantee integrity and autonomy (autonomy under God) to the intellectual enterprise. This is the challenge which is uppermost for Christian colleges. They can be places for open encounter, the encouraging of diversity, for an exploration of faith in a context of freedom which, though it avoids a dogmatic approach, remains faithful to an historically conceived Christian heritage. Encounter between

persons of different faiths or points of view must be a central aspect of a college or university; education can be interpreted as the way of learning the rules of encounter. The Christian college, instead of emphasizing an experience in uniformity, has the opportunity of making truly free encounter possible.

This is, of course, very difficult to emphasize in relation on the one hand to the belief that Christian colleges should teach only a Christian point of view, or, on the other hand, to current public affairs with their intense demands for security and safeness, and a climate determined by the arrogance of the closed mind. Sensing the revolutionary character of our time must be part of true education. At the same time, however, we must not forget the conserving function of education; perhaps education can be truly creative only to the degree that it fulfills this conserving role as well. Both sides are, of course, expressed at almost every point on the American campus, and generalizations about either the reactionary or the most liberal impulses among students and/or faculty members cannot, in all likelihood, be supported by evidence. The fact is that the American higher education scene presents an observer with wide diversity in both objectives and structures.

The single most important issue for education may be exactly at this point—the relation of education to the demands of society. Here a healthy tension is demanded because, at the same time, the educational system must be responsible to, but independent of control by, the

larger society which is its context. This becomes a very difficult principle to administer, of course, especially in relation to the problem of financing education. The contrast between British and American approaches to the issue is very apparent. In American colleges and universities the pattern of organization is the business corporation in which the administration is oriented outward to society and the "public," while the faculty is oriented inward toward the basic academic enterprise. In the older forms of British higher education, controls rests with the Guild of Masters, which is responsible for counter-acting any threats that may be made upon the autonomy of the academic community. Currently many of the British educators are disturbed by the way in which grants by Parliament constitute the largest amounts of the funds used for the universities. Though the University Grants' Committee is made up of university graduates and educational leaders, the problem of possible control is being felt and the Guild of Masters is alert to the implications of this for the freedom of the academic community. The point is that we can not be complacent—either in Britain or America—at the very center of the educational community; if we are, the determination of educational policy inevitably falls into the hands of groups which are not committed first of all to a free and responsible educational enterprise. This issue is not unrelated to the concern we have for discovering the basis of intellectual integrity and freedom in our Christian faith.

Faculty Christian Fellowship Consultation

More than thirty persons representing the Faculty Christian Fellowship, the National Council of Churches to which this work is related, some of the churches and agencies which are engaged in this area, and several foundations and other groups for whom this is a primary concern, met for a weekend consultation to give full attention to the organization and program developments of the Fellowship. It was a consultation called by the Fellowship's Executive Committee in order that it might better understand its responsibilities within the total context of the faculty Christian concern. The meeting was held at Howard University, Washington, D. C., from October 22nd to 24th, 1954. A working paper was given the central place in the discussions, and its questions dealt with (a) the structure, relationships, and objectives of the Fellowship, (b) the financial and staff needs of the future movement, and (c) the program plans which should be given priority in the months and years immediately ahead. Several general judgments, along with many specific suggestions, were arrived at in the consultation; these are briefly summarized as follows:

1. The Fellowship will, in the immediate future at least, attempt to keep in balance its three primary objectives of (a) acting as a service agency in liaison, coordination, and publication in relation to all agencies and groups in this area of endeavor, (b) developing further an actual "fellowship" among the community and communities of Christian faculty members throughout the country, and (c) providing leadership, statesmanship, and vision in the

long-term planning of policy in this field.

The role that the quarterly, *The Christian Scholar*, plays in this work is considered central, though it is, as the publication of the Commission on Christian Higher Education, not technically the "organ" of the Fellowship but devoted to more varied and more comprehensive interests. In the area of publications, the Executive Committee authorized the preparation and publication of a pamphlet which can serve as an introduction to the basic issues in the area of concern, to the work of the Fellowship and other groups, and to the most significant literature in this field. Bulletins which will serve as news-sheets, procedural guides, and instruments for the consideration of new and significant issues will be issued from time to time from the Fellowship administrative office.

2. The Fellowship will proceed immediately in the direction of becoming a membership organization. It will seek to enroll as its constituency primarily those persons in the academic professions for whom the concerns of the Fellowship are significant. It invites—through the pages of this journal, *The Christian Scholar*, and through a mailing soon to be prepared—all such persons to become its members and to share directly in this fellowship. Membership dues are to be set by the individual members themselves, upon the basis of their own recognition of the importance of the total cause and the depth of commitment necessary to its success in the future. It is to be realized that the office costs of placing a name on the membership list, the mailing and distributing of membership materials and informational bulletins, amounts to at

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least \$1.00 for each person each year. Those who set their dues at \$5.00 or more will receive, in addition, the current year's subscription to *The Christian Scholar*. It is recognized that membership in the Fellowship should not be a condition of membership in local, regional, or denominational groups. It invites all such persons as members, and it invites all denominational or other groups to consider themselves affiliated with the Fellowship in this common work.

3. The Fellowship will move, immediately, toward the financing and appointment of a full-time executive director in order to preserve the impetus thus far gained. Until the right person is found for this position, the Fellowship looks to the staff of the Department of Campus Christian Life (to which the Fellowship is directly related) for those services which are administratively necessary to coordinate the present work of the Fellowship, the denominational, regional, and other efforts and their staff workers in the field. It is understood that such staff persons as are now devoting their whole time, or a part of it, to this work, irrespective of their direct sponsoring agencies, are, in actuality serving the cause to which the Fellowship is devoted. This is true, as well, of the many persons who, as volunteers, assist the total enterprise on their own and on other campuses.

4. The Fellowship will begin immediately to make plans for a national conference in 1956. This will follow the last national conference after a three-year interval and serve to carry forward the Fellowship into the next major stage of its work. It is not yet clear what the specific character of the conference will be, but it is very likely to be essentially of a study and research type, though it may either include or further supplement another conference which will have the broader aim of dramatizing the growth and importance of faculty Christian work.

5. The primary responsibilities of the on-going work of the Fellowship will continue to be carried by the Executive Committee. Its membership remains unchanged though it is augmented by a number of *ex-officio* members who are persons directly related to this work in professional capacities; they serve also as consultants. Upon the completion of his term as chairman of the Executive Committee, Professor E. Harris Harbison left this position but remains on the Committee, and Professor J. Edward Dirks was elected to serve as chairman for the next term.

Further development and implementation of the basic general judgments and their more specific implications is to be undertaken as soon as possible by the Fellowship's Executive Committee.

British Dons' Conference

Word was received recently from Michael Foster, Fellow of Christ Church, Oxford, and chairman of the Dons' Advisory Group of the British S.C.M., that a Dons' Conference is to be held next year, 1955, from March 30 to April 4. American participants are invited once again; at the last such Conference in 1952, ten or twelve American faculty members were present. (For an announcement, write to *The Christian Scholar*, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.)

The theme of the Conference is to be "Christian and Scientific Beliefs." What is contemplated is having the two sets of beliefs with respect to common issues of concern confront one another, especially beliefs about the world, its origin and future, the concept of life, and the relation between Revelation and scientific discovery. The titles for the four days' themes are (a) Creation, (b) The Destiny of the Universe, (c) Life - the biblical and the biologists' conceptions, and (d) Revelation and Discovery. Two main speakers are to address themselves to each theme, one a theologian and the other a scientist. The talks are to occupy the morning; after tea groups will discuss the subject of the day; and in the evenings plenary discussions are to be held with the speakers present.

Mr. Foster, in his recent newsletter concerning the Conference, writes as follows: "One consequence, which was perhaps not clearly intended, seems to emerge from the plan of the conference itself. By comparing what the Bible

(or Christianity) and Science respectively say *about the world*, we preclude ourselves from solving the conflict between them by assigning to each a different area, e.g., the realm of "facts" to science the realm of "values" to religion, and by ascribing to each an undisputed authority in its own area. We are precluded from the solution which says, Science tells us what is the case, Religion tells us what we ought to do, ("we do not go to the Bible to learn about nature, but to learn how to live") because we shall be considering Biblical assertions in the factual area.

"These 'factual' statements about the world—what sort of facts do they assert? What does it mean to say that God created the world? Perhaps one thing which Christians are called upon to do in this matter, is not only to defend the truth of our assertions, but to learn what it is that we are asserting.

"Though the subject of the conference does not include ethics, it may be that it is not irrelevant to it. Have we not to some extent slipped into the notion of ethics as a detachable subject? Have we not preserved our open-mindedness towards the discoveries of science by stressing this detachability, fortifying ourselves by the assurance that no scientific discoveries about the world can affect the Christian teaching about conduct or the Christian promise of salvation? But perhaps it is really not Christian to hold that ethics is detachable from what we believe about nature, and perhaps an ethic which can be fitted interchangeably to any of a variety of views about nature is shown by that fact to be not fully Christian."

The Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowship Program

ROBERT RANKIN

Spirited leadership within the American Association of Theological Schools, and imaginative philanthropy on the part of the leaders of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have led to the formation of a fellowship program which, if successful, may bring new strength to the Christian churches of the United States and Canada. The program, inaugurated this fall, provides at a propitious time a fresh approach to a great need amongst us—the need for a greater number of gifted leaders in our churches.

The primary objective of the program is to increase the number of exceptionally able young people entering the Christian ministry. It proposes to do this by providing fellowships which will enable outstanding young men and women, not presently committed to the ministry, to devote themselves without obligation of any kind to a year of exploratory study at theological schools of their choice,¹ so that they may consider the vocation of the ministry. The fellowships are intended for students who are uncertain in regard to their vocation, young persons preparing for careers in other areas, and recent graduates of colleges and universities presently working in other fields or in the military services, who are willing to

give serious consideration to the ministry as their vocation.

It is believed by those of us working in this program that often the Protestant ministry *almost* secures the loyalty of strong and talented persons who, for lack of encouragement or because of misleading ideas about the vocation, enter other fields. It is hoped that a thorough exploration of the ministry during the year's study will tip the scale with many who become Fellows. It is believed also that those Fellows who elect not to enter the ministry, and who enter other vocations will be better prepared for those vocations and far more effective as laymen in their churches. There is, in fact, very keen interest in the results which the program may have in awakening young people to the full meaning of Christian vocation.

Considerable interest was evoked a year ago when the first announcements were made in the press regarding the establishment of the American Association of Theological Schools Fund, Inc., the corporation responsible for the fellowship program. Several hundred letters from all parts of the United States and Canada were then received by officers of the Fund, inquiring about the details of the plan, and many nominations for fellowships were submitted. From among those nominated, five young men were selected as the first recipients of the fellowship, and they are now studying in three theological schools in the United States. It is hoped that this spring as many as fifty young

The Reverend Robert Rankin is directing the "Theological Fellowship Program" this year; he is on leave from his work as Chaplain of the Associated Colleges of Claremont, (California).

¹ Limited to those schools fully accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools.

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people may be named as Fellows for the year 1955-56.

To reach that objective, the directors of the program will need the help of many people. Thus a systematic effort has already been initiated among the colleges and universities to announce the fellowships. President Nathan M. Pusey, of Harvard University, who is serving as President of the Fund, has recently written to administrators of institutions of higher learning in the United States and Canada announcing the availability of the fellowships, and requesting the appointment of a faculty member on each campus to serve as representative of the program. The attention and interest of readers of *The Christian Scholar* are especially invited, for the success of the plan will depend in large measure on the assistance the program receives from teachers who are sensitive to the needs of the Church,

and whose work often puts them into a direct relationship with students who possess the qualifications required for the ministry. Initiative on the part of educators and clergymen is especially important, for all persons to be considered for the fellowships must be nominated by a qualified person.

If you are interested in having additional information regarding the program, or if you wish to submit nominations for the 1955-56 fellowships, you are invited to write to the Executive Director of the program at 163 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey. Nominations for next year's fellowships must be received at Princeton prior to February 1, 1955. In the candidates to be considered for the fellowships, the directors of the program will be looking for religious depth, demonstrated intellectual excellence, and the finest qualities of Christian character and personality.

Faculty Seminar

The National Student Council of the YMCA and YWCA is sponsoring a faculty seminar in connection with the National Student Assembly of the YMCA and YWCA to be held December 27, 1954 to January 2, 1955 at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas.

The Seminar which was planned by the Committee on Religion in Higher Education will be focused on freedom. Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, Professor

Emeritus of Harvard University is chairman of the seminar program and other well qualified persons will help lead the group in its thinking about the nature of freedom and its importance in understanding man and his capacity to respond to God, to his fellow men and to the world.

Registration forms and further information about the seminar can be secured from Miss Jimmie Woodward of 600 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, New York.

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